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MONTHLY

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Chapman Bashler
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by Britt Carpenter

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by Dennis Heisler



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*It's a little
intimidating.*

**TIMEX
HUMVEE**

Taking the rap

All right. As I open my eagerly awaited June issue of *New Music Monthly*, I am assaulted by a huge dose of cleavage. It makes me rethink my magazine choice. *U.S. News And World Report* never has tits on the cover of its magazine. (Although I have not researched this I believe I am correct.) I do not think it is necessary for your spectacular monthly to resort to such tactics. Honestly, it's repulsive. She is a lovely woman that would most likely sell the magazine without exposing herself.

I am really not a prude,
Emily Meeks (emeeks@postbell.net)

Actually, there was this one *really* hot *U.S. News* cover of Madeline Albright where the light caught her just so... Seriously, when you make the decision to run a cover like our June issue, you'd be a fool not to know it's going to provoke a strong reaction, be it positive, negative or libidinous. And you'd be even more foolish not to realize that responding to those reactions either in earnest or with the wiseacre Editor Verité humor usually found in this space would make you look like, well, a fool. —Ed.

Ownership is nine-tenths

It took a couple days for me to figure it out, but the DJ Rap stuff was very funny. "She will own me." Ha-Ha. But seriously, when will you go back to putting real artists on the cover? Any more cover stories like this and you'll start losing credibility.
Brian Holm (briholm@dotmatrix.net)

Maxim reality

When I got your June 99 issue with DJ Rap on the cover through the mail, I had to make sure that it was *CMJ New Music Monthly*. Is this a scientific experiment hatched up by the evil geniuses in your lab to see if sex sells or have you kidnapped some of the editors of *Maxim* to be your slaves for the layout? If I saw this at the newsstand, I sure would buy it—it isn't fair! You had to appeal to the lowest common denominator (not that there's anything wrong with it!!!)
Johanna Fernandez (jogchikokto@earthlink.net)

Hang the DJ

I wanted to thank you for your truly special May issue, "Sluts With Turntables." I think it's fantastic that you are so attuned to the needs and interests of female readers. I hope I can look forward to future issues addressing such needs as how to see the keyboard over one's breast implants. Thanks to your article, I realized that saving up my money and buying a guitar was a silly and stupid idea. If I want to be part of the music scene, I have to save up for cosmetic surgery instead. I already knew this was the way to mainstream glory, but imagine my pleasure in finding out this would also lead me to credibility in the independent scene as well! No more indie music about stuffy things like melodies and talent, it's about cleavage and make-up! Well, all I can say is, it's about time. Now all I need to do is lose 20 pounds below my bight-weight ratio, and I too can enter the exciting world of soft porn. Thanks for the inspiration!
Daryn Paciotti

The thin Rap line

Am I out of line? Instead of reading your magazine, I listened to the June CD and stared at DJ Rap's breasts on the front cover. I was very impressed with both.
Rich (webmaster@pbroadcaststation.com)

One more radar lover gone

Trent Backroyd wrote in the June 1999 Geek Love column: "Q: Just how cool does it sound to say that your first foray into live musical entertainment was a double bill featuring Golden Earring and *Loveboy*?" Trent, my friend—you saw the coolest band in the universe that night, but it was Golden Earring, not *Loveboy*. And you saw them at the height of their "Twilight Zone" MTV popularity. George Kooyman is one of the great guitar heroes of all time, Barry Hay radiates cool, Rinus Gerritsen and Cesar Zuiderwijk should be household names in a perfect world. Check out their new import CD called *Paradise In Distress*. They're still going strong, and still making great music.
Dan Province (Arvada, Colorado)

Dear Dan,

If Dan is your real name—something makes me think it might be George, Rinus, Barry, or Cesar. Unfortunately I didn't get a chance to see much of *their* show. I was in the parking lot of the official "Q102 Golden Earring Sucks, *Loveboy* Rules Tollgate Party." It was (illegally) drinking Labats, and eating Canadian bacon (which I found to taste suspiciously more like ham than bacon). Anyway, I was able to catch *their* your last song, a 22-minute rendition of "Radar Love." I think this traumatic experience coupled with the whole "we'll trade you some dishes for *New York*" is why I don't completely trust the Dutch. In reference to the import-only status of *their* your new record *Paradise In Distress*, have you contacted CMC Records?

Sincerely Yours,
Trent Backroyd

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DRIVE TIME

Guided By Voices hitches a hi-fi ride with Ric Ocasek and T.V.T. Records. ★

Story: Matt Ashare

Photo: Mathius Clamer

It was bound to happen eventually. And it had certainly been hinted at on more than one occasion in the past. Indie-rock's quintessential four-track heroes would have to make a clean break from the cozy world of DIY home recording and take the 24-track plunge. And who better to facilitate such a bold step forward than Cars auteur Ric Ocasek? After all, if you're gonna do something silly, you might as well go all the way. And Slick Ric is one of those studio specialists for whom even 24 tracks has never really been enough to satisfy his panoramic vision. He's more into numbers like 36 and 43. The *Guided By Voices* would indeed be pleased.

And so, after flirting with the concept of making a full-on professional studio album on 1996's *Under The Bushes Under The Stars* and then again on 1997's *Mag Earwhig!*, only to be lured back to those nasty old lo-fi habits by the irresistible snap, crackle, and pop of the four- and eight-track, *Guided By Voices* threw caution to the wind and hitched a ride with Ocasek on the hi-fi highway. The result, *Do The Collapse*, finds Dayton, Ohio's best answer to Oasis working for a new boss, T.V.T. Records, and sounding bigger, slicker and, well, come to think of it, more like Oasis than most of us would probably like to admit. GBV frontman Robert "Bob" Pollard, who also happens to be the last original member in a band that now features former

Continued on page 20

"TEENAGE FBI" BY GUIDED BY VOICES APPEARS ON THE NEW RELEASE

Guided By Voices (continued from page 9)

Cobra Verde guitarist Doug Gillard, ex-Breeders drummer Jim MacPherson, and former Amp/Breeder Nate Farley on bass, is less likely to balk at such comparisons these days than you might expect.

"We've always wanted to make a really big, classic, arena rock-sounding Guided By Voices album," he relates over the phone from his home in Dayton. "But I guess we just didn't feel that we were ready to do it until now. Part of it just had to do with having the right band. But even when we were doing all of that weird four-track stuff, we still played like a real rock band live. But now we've got a band who can really play the classic stuff—all those sounds I always heard in my head—especially Doug, who I think is one of the best guitar players in the world."

Pollard says he originally hooked GBV up with Ocusek, who adds some very Cars-y synths to the opening track of *Do The Collapse*, when the band was still planning to make another album with Matador. "We'd already decided to do this kind of record because I really wanted it to go through that deal Matador had with Capitol. I was talking to the people at Capitol about it and they were totally behind the idea. They said that as long as we were willing to make a real studio album with a big name producer and everything, then they'd handle it."

Unfortunately, the Matador/Capitol deal fell apart before Pollard had a chance to put his plan into action. And when Matador let GBV's contract expire, Pollard decided it was time to move on. "There were a few [labels] that were

interested, butTVT offered us the best deal, just in terms of me having the freedom to put out my own little indie records. Plus, TVT's got KTC."

For those of you who already miss the hiss and hum of the old GBV, don't despair. Bob's keeping the old lo-fi aesthetic alive on his own The Fading Captain Series label, which put out the Pollard solo disc *Kid Marine* last year. One of the label's newest releases is *In Shop We Build Electric Chairs: Professional Music By Nightwalker, 1984-1993*. Pollard claims that Nightwalker is "an obscure Bloomington, Indiana, band." But, damn if it doesn't sound suspiciously like Bob Pollard and his former GBV buddies Tabin Sprout and Mitch Mitchell kicking it old school with a raucous little home-recorded session. Old habits do die hard. **MMH**

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Mike Patton restores faith with a new Mr. Bungle album and a new label, Ipecac.

California is not the record you'd want to spend time with if you were under the influence of hallucinogens. Or perhaps you would—if you're in the mood for a trip in every sense of the word. Mr. Bungle's third opus is a wondrous amalgamation of styles that induces memories of Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean, days at the beach, doses of hardcore rockabilly, lovable schmalz and bizarre sound effects. Some songs are so dense and odd, in fact, that singer Mike Patton is wondering how to perform them live.

"We're trying to figure out how to pull that off at the moment!" he chuckles. "There may be some Milli Vanilli stuff going on. It's going to be a whole new approach."

"The record sounds like a picnic with an occasional hailstorm, so we figured California would work," the fast-talking Patton says of the title. "We were going to call this *In Technicolor*, but for obvious copyright reasons, we couldn't." It is indeed a vividly colored and textured soundtrack straight from the twisted and fertile mind of Mr. Bungle main man Patton and his equally eccentric band of merry men—Bär (horns/keyboards), Trevor Dunn (bass/keyboards), Danny Heifetz (percussion/keyboards), Trey Spruance (guitar/keyboards).

"To us it's pop-y," Patton says of songs such as "None Of Them Knew They Were Robots," "The Air-Conditioned Nightmare" and "Sweet Charity." "But to some fucking No Doubt fan in Ohio, they're not going to swallow that!"

Patton's previous band, Faith No More—which scored a mega-hit with the 1990 single "Epic," as well as smaller successes—was more radio-oriented than Mr. B. if only barely by the end of that band's run. But Patton's other new efforts will likely garner less airplay than either of his other lineups. The San Francisco-based musician is now label head for Ipecac Recordings, in partnership with Greg Werckman, who for years helped run Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles label.

Ipecac's first release is from the "neo-metal" band Fantomas, featuring Patton and Buzz Osborne of the Melvins. The label has a half-dozen releases on deck for 1999, including three Melvins records and a Japanese noise group Patton is working with.

Ipecac (which is a medicinal shrub used in treating accidental poisonings by inducing regurgitation) has Patton excited about his tenure in label-dom. "It doesn't take a brain surgeon: You record an album cheaply, you'll recoup quickly, and you'll be in the money," he observes. "It's been an eye-opening experience realizing how much more simple it is than I thought it was."

Of course, Mr. Bungle is on Warner Bros., and Patton is not displeased. "They've been pretty good to this band for a while... I don't know why," he muses. "I was afraid to ask. I don't think they understand us, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

>>>Katherine Turman



(m ó a)

UNIVERSAL

Jazz-cabaret vocals blend with sampladelic club beats and cinematic orchestration on this Icelandic chanteuse's debut album.

IN STORES NOW

"It's truly rare to find a record as technically well-realized yet so thoroughly captivating from start to finish" —*SOMA*

"You will be told [Móa íá] Partisheed with a smile but their brand of trip hop is more challenging than that" —*Esquire*

"Impressive...jazztastic textures but with richly emotive soul pop tunes on top that seep into your consciousness so you end up dreaming about them" —*NME*

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Weird Record Of The Month



EVP, or Electronic Voice Phenomena, is the name given to strange voices that appear on recording tape—from radio interference, from magnetic glitches, or, as some people like to believe, from the voices of the dead, sending messages back to the living. **The Ghost Orchid** (Ash International), put together by England's Parapsychic Acoustic Research Cooperative, collects over 75 examples of EVP, mostly recorded by a Yorkshire researcher named Raymond Cass. The voices come across through heavy radio static, and appear to send cryptic messages, often switching languages every word or two. Of course, as the CD booklet points out, "ghost voices" can be generated very easily by playing multiple spoken-word sources at once, forwards or backwards; any combination of phonemes can sound like it's saying something apropos in some language. For fun, listen to the disc without paying attention to the explanations and see if the ghosts are saying something personal to you. >>>Douglas Volk

Random Quotes

"I was Ferris Bueller in high school; when I saw the movie, I said, 'Hey, that's me.' **I controlled the school.** I was accepted in all the circles: the jocks liked me, the greasers liked me, the eggheads liked me, the sashes liked me. **I always wanted to go back to a reunion, but I was afraid I'd forget people's names.** I thought it would look arrogant. Then I realized they give you these little stickers with your names on them."



>>>Alice Cooper, on school being out forever

"He's a Venus flytrap. This beautiful, charming thing, but once you get too close he just fucks you. **I don't know one person who likes him."**

>>>Slash Mouth's Steve Horwell, on why he and Third Eye Blind's Stephan Jenkins can't be friends

EE-KOO EE-KOO!



L-R: HARTMAN, SWIGGS, OIWA

Undaunted by having its name—and math homework—stolen, **IQU** takes its drum 'n' theremin 'n' bass on the road.

Kento Oiwa is on a mission. He's driven more than an hour to the minimalist-chic Seattle nightclub AROspace to convince a visiting Tomoyuki Tanaka (a.k.a. Fantastic Plastic Machine) to remix one of IQU's new songs. The Japanese DJ/electronic music artist doesn't make any promises, citing a litany of such requests, but Oiwa's smiling anyway; the nice folks in the musician-friendly club gave him a free meal for his troubles.

Oiwa and band mates Michiko Swiggs and Aaron Hartman have resigned themselves to rejoicing in small pleasures, in part because the Olympia, Washington, band has encountered a spell of adversity since releasing its charming, lo-fi drum 'n' bass debut last year, *Chotto Matte A Moment* (K). First came a name change to IQU from ICU (both pronounced, in Teletubby-like phonetics, as ee-kool). The inducement was a sternly written notice from a self-proclaimed "neo punk hard rock band" from New York that wasn't willing to share the name with a West Coast counterpart. No hard feelings.

"A guy in Athens, Georgia, gave us their record for free," Oiwa says of ICU. Swiggs punctuates the anecdote: "He said it wasn't gonna sell anyway."

Another threat to IQU's well being came in the usually neighborly environs of Vancouver, where a wayward Canadian broke into the band's van on a bright Sunday afternoon. The thief could have done some serious damage: Both on record and on stage, IQU derives its sound from a one-of-a-kind mix of theremin, upright bass, turntables, oscillators, guitar, samplers and sequencers. The only items lost were Hartman's bass, Oiwa's headphones and, somewhat to Swiggs's amusement, her math book and homework. "They didn't steal our records or samplers or keyboards," Oiwa says, relieved.

With a new name and a new bass, the trio is ready to make the best of a fresh start. First up is an attention-getting collaboration with Portland, Oregon, performance artist Miranda July, which combines IQU's sonic chicanery with July's harsh, character-driven narratives. The EP's two lengthy tracks, "Girls On Dates" and "Kida-Co-Coma," sound like late-'90s updates of Laurie Anderson's early work, and both get churned up as self-made remixes.

The group is also in the process of recording its second full-length for K. The goal, the band says, is to improve the sound quality, though the trio insists on continuing to work exclusively in K owner Calvin Johnson's Dub Narcotic studio, the same eight-track set-up that inspired the ingenuity behind the full-sounding *Chotto Matte*. After that? A whopping ten-week tour. "We can't keep jobs," Oiwa says, "so we may as well stay on the road."

>>>Richard Martin



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UK chart-toppers Super Furry Animals launch two very different insurgencies in the US.

The Super Furry Animals' recent album *Radiator* (Flydaddy) opens with the delirious, supersonic manifesto "Placid Casual," which includes the line, "Fuzz clogs up my video/What do we do now/Now we are free again?" Considering how mediocre the Welsh quintet now considers its last album *Fuzzy Logic*, which clogged the UK charts with dazzling singles like "If You Don't Want Me To Destroy You" and "Something 4 The Weekend," the line sounds like a mission statement. Only it turns out the song's actually about geo-political instability, which just proves how silly it is to make assumptions about a band capable of drawing influence from Abba to Zappa, Merseybeat to the mods, but which actually started six years ago as an anarchist techno collective. "It's about post-revolution," explains singer Gruff Rhys, over an Easter Sunday breakfast of bagels and coffee. "It could be about the day after Lenin. You know, you win the revolution, you think you're free. The euphoria of revolution, the spirit, is amazing. But after two days, then what? Where do you go from there?"

Revolutionaries or not, the Super Furry Animals had to ask themselves that question as well after the sprawling, neo-psychedelia of *Fuzzy Logic* that the band now considers way too unfocused, and that the British press was too happy to pigeonhole as Britpop nonetheless. Worn down, the band returned to North Wales, and made its follow-up album in a small village, so close to a Royal Air Force runway that pilots waved to them during landings. Their experiences with Britpop over-exposure—not to mention cabin fever from being crammed together in a small bungalow all day—give *Radiator* its sense of paranoia and end of the millennium psychosis blues, from the Cold War fears of "She's Got Spies" and "Demons" to the don't-believe-the-hype warnings "The International Language of Screaming" and "Play it Cool." "We pushed the songs more. Each song is more crisp and decisive," Rhys explains. "But it started off as this really poppy album, and then we hit this Altamont mark downward, and all these slower, deadlier songs appeared by the end. The whole time we recorded, Hole-Bopp comet appeared. That made us go paranoid and crazy." They won't have the comet to blame for the manic *Guerilla* (also on Flydaddy), out in July.

"It's even more all over the place, but it's much more uplifting and positive," Rhys says of the new record. "I think every album you make should be different from the last."

In fact, the band has already planned very different directions for its next two records: an album of acoustic Welsh tunes, and a return to their electronic roots, with a leisurely, landscaped techno record.

"I think we've passed the time of Bob Dylan going electric. This is nothing quite like that," Rhys says. "The whole notion of being in a band is so clichéd anyway. It's ridiculous. You should do what you're comfortable with. We try our best to make coherent music. This is what happens." >>>David Dwyer

THE COMP PILE

TITLE	CONCEPT	TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	NAMES TO DROP	SUMS IT UP	VERDICT
Abolitions And Reconstructions (Eighteenth Street Lounge)	DC duo Thelony Corporation reissues a lot of cool, trendy stuff as heard in their cool, trendy club	Well-dressed clubbers and beatsters	Reminis of David Byrne, Stereolab, Placido S, Black Uhuru	Stereolab "lickertape Of The Uncosscious"	Cool tracks shakers and sippers—the better version of a swank night out
Electro-Lounge (Night Shift-Capitol)	Electronica artists remix lounge-era classics	Lovers of the ironic and electronic	Neat Beat Manifesto, Q-Burns Abstract Message	"The Good, The Bad And The Ugly (oldschool garage remix)"	Dean Martin coming on to Jolie London in the strains of drem 'n' bass—yeah, baby!
Fellicity (Nighthood)	Tracks from the WB's series about a college freshman in the wilds of NYC	Young women between their 'N Sync and NFR stages	Sarah McLachlan, Kate Bush, Neil Finn, Ivy	Kate Bush "This Woman's Work"	The music of the college experience, compiled for those still awaiting their first sexual experience
Nightmares: From Rotterdam—The U.S. Edition (Moonshine)	An introduction to the Netherlands hardcore techno and "gabber" scene for US audiences	Kids with 40s and phat pants, for whom sound can never be too loud and beats never too hard	Lenny Dee, Ecoreasters	Lenny Dee Vs. DJ Paul "Make It P" "King Leader"	For those of you who like rave, but find it lacking that essential element of violence
Punk-2-Rama 4 (Gothip)	"Dirt cheap" (\$4.98) compilation of the punk that rocks you	Impressionable young minds without a lot of allowance to blow	Rancid, Pennywise, Bad Religion, Tom Waits, Bouncing Souls, NOFX	Pennywise's otherwise unmissable "Fight It"	Priced to move—you into the mosh pit
Unosind: A Tribute To The Go-Go's (4 Alarm)	They got the beat: Also-cans pay tribute to '80s pop/punk sweetbeats	Undiscriminating new wavers	Sunset Valley, Frags, Fig Dish, Season To Risk	The Frogs "Vacation" -or- Alison Beaulieu's star-led "Weddy"	Their lips are sealed; wish we could say the same for our ears
Where is My Mind?: A Tribute to the Pixies (the Factory-Intig)	Today's college rockers pay tribute to the penultimate college rock band	Lots of the dial habitats	Nate Dorf, Weezer, Superdrag, Far, Local H	Rival Big Fish's booney "Gigantic"	A "gigantic" surprise: a tribute compilation that's actually good
Y2K (Columbia)	Time capsule of electronic-dance hits, just in case the Y2K bug kills everyone's sequencers	Those too impatient to wait for the Time-Life Greatest Electronica Hits Of The '90s TV offer	Chemical Brothers, Fatboy Slim, Propellerheads, Underworld, Björk, Prodigy	Fatboy Slim's hit "The Rockafeller Skank"	You'll need something to play on New Years eve/1999? and "2001," and it's a must-on if you're not sick of "Rockafeller Skank" yet

TROPICAL PUNCH

It wasn't rock critics calling **Os Mutantes'** Tropicalia sound revolutionary. It was the government.

The Mutantes' guitarist Sergio Dias Baptista has fond memories of the "happening" they put together at the Casa Grande Theater in Rio de Janeiro to celebrate the release of their third album, *A Divina Comédia Ou Ando Meio Desligado*. "It was one of the first multi-media experiments here—boy, am I sick of that term! We had a totally crazy act with 13 other guys and girls acting and dancing and cinema projected of a brain surgery, and we threw nets on the audience, and there were huge tractors, tires, tubes and balls and very loud rock 'n' roll. It was a sight to see."

And this happened in 1970, when even playing electric guitars in Brazil would get a band cursed as pro-American, and traditionalists had had electric instruments banned from Brazil's Festival of Popular Music. The Mutantes—a young trio comprised of Baptista, his brother Arnaldo and singer Rita Lee, assisted by a handful of other musicians and arranger Rogério Duprat—were at the forefront of the "Tropicalia" movement that reached out to rock, psychedelia and experimental music, which meant they played whatever the hell they wanted to. Spanish guitars and hissing acid-rock electric guitars, gorgeous Beatles-ish pop melodies and parodies of Brazilian folk tunes, flashes of electronics and intense percussion workouts, tripped-out tape experimentation and exquisite three-part harmonies nestled up close to each other like the differences just didn't matter. Of course, they mattered a lot more at the time, when playing the way the Mutantes did was an explicitly political statement. Brazil was still shaken up from the military coup of 1964, and the "openness" in the arts that spawned Tropicalia only went so far—there were riots at the first major Mutantes performance.

Though the Mutantes' songwriters on their earliest records included a lot of names of artists who have since crossed over to American audiences—Jorge Ben, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil—the band never had a record released in the US, and sang exclusively in Portuguese. (They did make an English-language album, *Technicolor*, in 1971, but it was never officially released; tapes of it have only recently surfaced.) A few years ago, though, multi-generation

cassettes of their marvelous early albums started circulating around the rock underground (Kurt Cobain was a fan, and Beck named his album *Mutations* in tribute to them). Now the first three Mutantes discs have been reissued by the new Omplattens label, and David Byrne's *Luaca Bop* is releasing a greatest-hits album. *Everything Is Possible*.

The band's records were subject to diminishing returns through the early '70s, and eventually it split up as the driving forces of Tropicalia drifted apart. But the Mutantes' historical moment was unlike anything else: "It was the process of doing things and being adolescent, and being able to do whatever we wanted in any respect," Dias says. "It was the constant exhilaration of freedom." >>>Douglas Wolk

Label Profile

"I was born in '54—the year rock was born," says Dave Heckman, founder and president of **Metropolis Records**. A top industrial label for five years now, Metropolis grew from Digital Underground, a record store Heckman opened in Philadelphia in '91. "I was like, 'If I can sell 300 copies of these records at one store in Philly at high import prices, what could I do for these bands if I started a label and distribution company?'" Today Metropolis—itsself distributed through Caroline—boasts such industrial stalwarts as Front 242, cEvin Key (ex-Skinny Puppy), and Front Line Assembly (which released its latest album, *Implode*, in April), in addition to distributing releases by smaller labels including Kyan, Bedazzled and Dancing Ferris and overseas labels such as Trinity, World Serpent and NovaTock. What does the future hold? Heckman says the heart is industrial but "we're moving a little in the goth direction. I've been more picky about that because I think the good bands in that genre are awesome—Siouxsie & The Banshees, Cure. But a lot of it's very, very cheesy, and a lot of the people in the scene are really weird. I'm always going out meeting kids in black dresses—and a lot of them are guys!"

Tours We'd Like To See

Smells Like Teen Spirit Tour:

Imperial Teen, Atari Teenage Riot, Teen Beaters, Teen Idols, Teen Idles, Pain Teens, Teenage Fanclub, Teengenerate, Pristeens, Rock 'A' Teens, Royal Teens, Teenage Jesus And The Jerks

Random Quotes

"Politics are in my songs in the same way that to be lovers—to have a relationship—is politics, the same way that staring at the moon is politics.

For us Brazilians, politics is a very important matter, because politics is destroying us. **It's fucking up the country.** Politics are in my music because it is part of our food. It is very important."

>>>Tom Zie, on the politics of, mmm, feelin' good



STYLING: DE JARINA

In My Room

BARRY ADAMSON

Wu-Tang Clan

Enter The Wu-Tang:
36 Chambers



Quincy Jones

(soundtrack) In Cold Blood

Sly & The Family Stone

There's A Riot Going On

Alice Cooper

"School's Out"

SPAHN RANCH - Athan Maroulis

Bobby Darin

As Long As I'm Singin'



Daniel Wolf

(book) You Send Me: The Life
And Times Of Sam Cooke

Peter Murphy

Recall

Russ Colombo

Save The Last Dance For Me

The Best Of James Bond, 30th Anniversary
Collection

XTC - Andy Partridge

A three-inch high
aluminum figure of a
union soldier, from a
19th century US Funfair
shooting gallery.



Jean Claude Pifret

(book) Figurine Publicitaires

A French book about free gifts given with
products such as coffee, cereal, soap
powder, etc.: full of cheap plastic treasure.

Louie Jordan

Five Guys Named Moe

Me and Harry (aged 11) love it to bits.

A set of stone building bricks by Anchor Of
Germany

Marco Ferreri

(film) Carne

A piece of Italian nonsense starring the
impossibly scrumptious Francesca Dellera

APARTMENT LIFE



In his solo four-track project **Dump**, Yo La Tengo bassist James McNew covers Prince and Sun Ra, samples *The Simpsons*, and writes winsome melodies that'll shred your heartstrings.

"Cooking, cleaning, recording songs—it's just something I do at home," shrugs a modest James McNew, who's best known as the member of Yo La Tengo not linked by matrimony, the silent giant who ended the band's earlier Spinal Tap-esque tragicomedy of rotating bassists. DIY aficionados also recognize McNew as the sole member of Dump, the moniker under which he's released three albums and more singles and compilation tracks than mere mortals can count. "We're about to move into a house," he continues. "It'll be great not to have to put my equipment away every time I want to do something real life, like pay bills."

James is a music junkie who'd be committing his guitar/Casio/drumbox sketches to four-track cassette in his Brooklyn railroad flat even if he weren't making a living at it. Witness his "Assault On Springfield" project, assembled with so many uncredited samples from *The Simpsons* that he knows it'll never be released. Music has really consumed his life—but in a good way. "I've been a professional musician for seven years," he beams. "When Yo La Tengo played on Conan O'Brien in '93 I think that's when my parents gave in and realized this really was my life."

The key to Dump's charm lies in McNew's knack for winsome originals and ear for remarkably diverse cover versions—spanning Sun Ra, Wreckless Eric, Henry Mancini, and Dave Davies, for starters—all dispensed wholly devoid of the irony often accompanying such interpretations. This year has seen a flurry of Dump activity, beginning with a cassette-only release of Prince covers on Shrimper, *That Skinny Motherfucker With The High Voice* (the title is a nod to a line from The Artist's legendary bootleg *Black Album*). The originals-laden *Women In Rock* EP (also on Shrimper) appeared in March, alternating krautrock drones with achingly sweet melodies. A split 7" with Lambchop offers a cover of the Go-Betweens' "Dive For Your Memory." "It's a song I never liked, but I saw Robert Forster do it at an in-store once and it was the most beautiful thing I ever heard," recalls McNew. "So I ran back to the old record, and did kind of a 13th Floor Elevators version of it. Sometimes I do covers because I like a song; other times it just comes out of fiddling with equipment, figuring out different ways to approach things." Dump's fourth full-length CD is due by year's end.

Dump's rare live shows are usually solo affairs, but have included a roving cast of accomplices. "I'm hoping to replace myself in the group eventually," McNew deadpans, "so I can just stay home and watch basketball. It'll be like seeing the Residents, where you never know who'll show up. Just put a bunny head [Dump's crudely cute trademark] on some overweight guy and stick him on stage."

>>>Glen Savady

JAMIROQUAI

Q&A



The cat in the hat is back: Seven million copies of *Travelling Without Moving*, a Grammy and four MTV Video Awards later, space cowboy Jay Kay—better known by his nom de chapeau Jamiroquai—gets things *Synkronized* (WORK). >>>Tom Lanham

Q: Your new song "Soul Education" seems to frame your save-the-Earth message in more "everyman" terms—with a "soul education" being an instinctive understanding of universal truths.

A: Absolutely right, man. And we've all got it—we all know what's right and wrong. A soul education is what we're all born with, and the [song's] lyrics say, "Life information—it's on the breeze." If you need to know something about the world, or need to know whether you should do this or that, all you have to do is get away from [the city] and go sit outside in the countryside and watch the insects, the birds and animals. It's so fascinating, and so much better for your psyche and your soul. I don't see why we go, "Isn't it fascinating how animals have a sixth sense and the dog kind of knows when you're coming home?" We all have that!

Q: So what programs it out of some folks?

A: The media, television, advertising, lack of education, poverty. And poverty just comes from lack of education anyway. Let's face it—we don't want everyone in the world educated, because if everyone is educated they'll all want what we've got. I think people just get detached from the minute they're fucking born, and my generation is one of the last generations that had any hope for a natural, fairly undisturbed upbringing. When I see kids today, and they're on those fucking PlayStation games all day long, in front of the television... Now kids know they can get their thrills straightaway just by pressing a button, so they're glued to this shit. Take a load of city kids [to the countryside] now, and I'll bet they're never seen a fucking goat, never seen a sheep, never seen fuck all except buildings, poverty, killing, mugging and drugs. How can we possibly expect them to be contributors to the planet?

Q: They could find a sheep website on the Internet. Phone up a farmer and hear one on their free-roaming cellular.

A: Man, I didn't get a mobile phone 'til I bought a Mercedes Benz, and it just came with one in it. And now people are so surprised about cellars—"Wow! It's affecting my brainwaves!" Well, what did you expect if you hold something like that next to your head all day? People are crazy! Like with the genetic thing—"Oh, we'll make a sheep!" And there's no possible way that in two years' time they'll be trying to do that with humans, right? Surely they'll just stick with sheep! People are so stupid. Of course they're going to do it! You can't stop scientists from fucking about behind closed doors—they're going to do whatever the fuck they like. And what kind of world are we going to have when every dad says, "I want a boy? How hideous! And all that is, is an extension of your Aryan Nation. I'm totally, vehemently against it. I do not believe that you muck about with what makes people, people. Think about it. What would normal life be like if everyone was my shape and we all had my hair? It would be hell!"

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David Johansen	Resurrection Hex (KMFHM Gigante Mix)
Alabama Song	Rise Inch Bella
David Bowie	Wish
Airborn Eight Flight	Spiritualised
BJORK	None Of The Above/The Individual
By Spine (Evelyn Glennie)	Bryan Ferry
Radiobead	Smoke Gets in Your Eyes
Exit Music (For A Film)	Pulp
Barry Adamson	I Spy
What Is Love	Mitchell Froom featuring Mark Hissell
N.L. Burnside	Wetery Eyes
Mollin' Tumblin'	Jules Cruise
Baby Sero	Summer Kisses Winter Tears
Vernee Bird	Yanessa Deau
Grant Lee Buffalo	Is I Could (What I Would Do For You)
Lemon Called Reception	Sugar
Violent Femmes	A Good Idea
Color Me Bace	Pinize
Blur	Here Comes Your Man
No Distance Left	Tom Waits
	The Green Room's Want Us Today

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BY SPY MAGAZINE

SELF

"Anti-rock": That's how Self's Matt Mahaffay describes his new album, *Breakfast With Girls* (Spongethats-DreamWorks). "Subliminal Plastic Motives had tons of guitars on it," he explains of his band's debut album, "and I was going to all these rock stations and playing all these fucking rock clubs... I was kind of more into Prince and fuckin' Big Daddy Nova and L.L. Cool J and makin' hearts and stuff. And I think I kind of gave the wrong impression as the first record." *Breakfast* sets things straight with a delightful mélange of pop and hip-hop: Sounding equal parts Back and Jellyfish, the songs mix beely-shakin' beats with zippy samples and keezy keyboard melodies. Mahaffay also produces other artists' records in his home studio—a solo album by Fallout's Ben Andrews, who also appears on *Breakfast*, is one of his latest projects—and helps run Spongethats, the local (Marblehead, Tennessee) label that he and two friends launched a couple years back. "I guess the big picture," he offers, "is to have this log of maturing and something that, when I'm dead, it'll still be on the planet to prove that I was here, in some maazy way." >>>Jenny Ellicott



BY SPY MAGAZINE

ARSONISTS

It takes a little studying to figure out Brooklyn's Arsonists. The band numbers anywhere from five to nine members, although there are really three core MCs/producers: Q-Uinque, D-Stray and Freestyle. On stage, they rank push 20 plus. And their musical needs aren't set in stone either—sometimes they're dead-serious and menacing, sometimes glib, loose and greasy. But it's this versatility, and ambiguity, that makes the Arsonists so interesting to listen to and to watch. With quicksilver freestyle skills and one of the more impressive and intelligent collective lyrical ranges out there, their appeal is crossover-friendly (the vinyl LP for "Pyromaniac" dented the *Billboard* singles chart in May, claiming #61 in NYC) without compromising a thing. Atypically for hip-hop groups, the Arsonists honed their skills on the road, having toured Europe and the UK three times; they'll be touring their new country soon in support of their self-produced debut, *As The World Burns* (Matador), set for release in August and sure to spread the word like wildfire on a dry hillside. >>>Brian Coleman



BY SPY MAGAZINE

NEW AMERICAN SHAME ★

Once singer Johnny Rüttel opens his mouth on the self-titled debut EP from his two-year-old Seattle band New American Shame, it's abundantly clear where his muse got its rock 'n' roll training. And just in case you haven't figured it out by the time you reach the disc's second-to-last tune, he drops a big old hint when he growls, "Last again on the Highway to Hell!" Yeah, Bob Scott's distinctively sluggish bark is definitely the main inspiration for Rüttel's raw and raucous vocalizing, and the rest of New American Shame—guitarists Henry Pashen and Terry Bratsch, bassist Nelly Wheeler, and drummer Jack Stringham—is more than happy to oblige him by pounding out burly, blues-based hard-rock riffage that sounds more like AC/DC than AC/DC has in years. The disc, which was produced by Brett Hansen (Mad Season, Neil Young, Pearl Jam), came out on the Seattle indie HRI Records earlier this year, but the band has already been snapped up by Atlantic imprint Lava, which is releasing a remastered, full-length version this summer. That'll coincide nicely with NARS's nationwide tour opening for the recently reunited Cult. Apparently, it's not quite such a long way to the top if you wanna rock 'n' roll in 1999. >>>Matt Fahren

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epic records group



MACY GRAY**On How Life Is**

When Macy Gray was growing up in Ohio, other kids poked fun at her strange raspy voice, making her so paranoid she seldom spoke. Years later she accidentally discovered singing and became known as the soothing singer behind the "Winter Wonderland" Gap ad. Now on her debut album, Gray's unique voice dazzles. A raw cross between the husky seductiveness of old-school divas like Eartha Kitt and Tina Turner and the street raunch of modern-day playas like Foxy Brown, her singing is the album's chief selling point. Driven by Macy's vocals, *On How Life Is* proffers a catchy hybrid of gritty soul and R&B, funky up with hip-hop attitude, including DJ Shadow and Kurtis Blow samples. As the title suggests, these songs are sneak peaks into the life of one helluva tough-talking mama. Her perspective shifts from a sex-crazed freak on "Sex-O-Matic" to a woman spurned on the ballad "Still," and on the sassy standout "I've Committed Murder"—a revenge tale set against a lush background of organs, vibes and marimbas—she's a stone cold killer who offs and robs the "mean ol' bitch" her lover worked for and brags about getting away with it. One can speculate wildly about the inspiration for such a song, but like life's irregularities, Macy Gray's rootsy sound is far from predictable, making it a sweet diversion from the homogenized smooth R&B that's clogging the charts.

>>>Sarah Pratt

Clean Slate-Epic

**OUT:**

July 27

FILE UNDER:

Smoky, raucy R&B

R.I.V.L.:

Denise Ferris, Erykah Badu, Cassandra Wilson, Billie Holiday

LAMB**Fear Of Fours**

Lamb's name may sound cute and fluffy, but *Fear Of Fours* isn't an album that suggests bounding around a springtime meadow. Instead, the British group's sophomore album is a dark and smoky listen, located squarely in post-Portishead downbeat, jazzy trip-hop-pop territory. Despite Louise Rhodes's sultry but heartbroken-sounding vocals and Andy Barlow's fondness for brooding stand-up bass and sluggish beats, this is by no means just rote sulktronica. The duo clearly has widely varying (if not clashing) interests, and that keeps things interesting. Barlow's Howie B-influenced instrumental tracks experiment with a wide variety of beats, throwing in jumpy drum 'n' bass time signatures, adding sampled horns and hloops, twisting and contorting. Rhodes's folkie instincts prevail on other cuts, with her sing-songy voice and spooky enunciation taking the spotlight in front of spare arrangements. Most satisfying is when the two reach stylistic middle ground, sometimes taking hitlithely poppy but enjoyable turns, as on "Fly," but best of all when the dour arrangements and Rhodes's chanteusey complement each other. "Bonfire" and "Lullaby," with their lugubrious string sections, plodding beats that are heavy on the brushed cymbals, and whispered, pained vocals, are cut closely from the Portishead cloth—but have a drama and emotional power that grab you by the throat all the same.

>>>David Jarman

Fontana

**OUT:**

July 27

FILE UNDER:

Dark, lovely trip-hop

R.I.V.L.:

Portishead, Massive Attack, 12 Bands

CAETANO VELOSO**Livro**

For several decades and through four proper stateside releases, Brazilian pop star Caetano Veloso slammed into the same obstacle that's plagued every other musician outside the English-speaking world: the language barrier. But with Americans embracing more exotic fare, in part at the urging of established American stars such as Beck, Peter Dinklage and David Byrne, Veloso and his gifted countrymen are finding an eager new audience. *Livro* ("Book") provides instant satisfaction: it's a colorful display that stretches back to early Brazilian samba, stops off in the psychedelic '60s Tropicalia movement and pulls up at the fin de millennium as an impossibly stylish collage with Veloso's soothing Portuguese tongue at its center. The musical potpourri includes his own light-as-mousse acoustic guitar plucking and various backing by Bahian drum choirs, swelling string orchestras, joyful horn sections, and funk-tinged rock ensembles. In other words, this ain't "Girl From Ipanema." And as for that pesky language problem, Veloso's poetic, humorous and sparkingly clever lyrics come with translation in the CD booklet. Then again, his music's playful personality and his voice's enrapturing richness hurdle the language barrier in a dazzling Olympian leap, leaving behind a warm, comforting breeze—tropical, but hardly foreign.

>>>Richard Martin

Nonesuch

**OUT:**

June 1

FILE UNDER:

Brazilian '60s Brazilian

R.I.V.L.:

Gilberto Gil, Beck's "Tropicalia," Belice Tropical compilation, Os Mutantes

ORANGE 9MM ★

Pretend I'm Human

NC

Orange 9MM, whose specialty is half-pipe worthy urban anthems, has never endured a dull moment. Throughout its tumultuous career, OSMM has bounced from an indie label to the majors and back to an indie. And the band is currently solidifying its lineup with a new bassist and second guitarist (fiery vocalist Chaka Malik assumed bass duty for the recording). When these guys suffer such upsets, though, it only strengthens their output. *Pretend I'm Human* is an appropriate title, since here, Orange 9 is making every attempt to sound superhuman. While the band still builds its foundation upon skateboard-able metal riffs, thumpy bass lines, and Malik's ability to bust rhymes and carry a tune, *Pretend I'm Human* offers the experimental departure of a series of spoken word-type interludes. When Malik's voice echoes and bellows with intensity and conviction over powerhouse guitars, you don't need to analyze his words to get the gist—it's the sheer anger that makes it so compelling to hear. OSMM also makes good use of quiet-loud dynamics, alternately patting you on the back with soothing passages and then cracking your cranium with monster riffs. The band's clever seating arrangement of artsy hits alongside bare bones energy makes one thing certain: You won't be bored.

>>>Amy Sciarretto



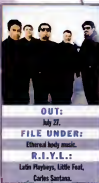
LOS LOBOS

This Time

Hollywood

All bands should envy Los Lobos. They're hitting middle age, but getting more musically spry. They survived their commercial compromise (*La Bamba*) and kept their dignity. They've found a production team, Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake, that lets them explore any style they fancy—roots-rock, boleros and rancheros, even avant-noise. And now that most of the members have other creative dimensions—David Hidalgo and Louie Perez as Latin Playboys with Froom and Blake, and Cesar Rosas with his own band—Lobos can focus on everyone's best sounds. The enjoyable *This Time* does just that, retreating from the quirky patina of Lobos' last two releases, *Kiko* and *Colossal Head*; it's their straightest album since 1987's *By The Light Of The Moon*. Coming just months after Dose, the Playboys' latest, strange album, *This Time* borrows a bit of that project's spirit—the polyrhythmic "La Playa," the head-throbbing "High Places"—but leavens it with traditional Latin music ("Cumbia Raza," "Corazon") and the American rock Lobos explored in the '80s, including the relentlessly catchy "Runaway With You." As current as its title sounds, *This Time*'s lyrics in fact explore mortality and the fleetingness of life: "Why do the days go by so fast?/I only time was built to last." You'd expect those words to emanate from some band on the oldies circuit, without half of Lobos' vitality.

>>>Chris Malachuk



KRISPY

From The Country

Bomb Hip Hop

UK rappers always have a tougher time breaking out than their American counterparts, so it's not surprising that Lancashire duo Krispy would fly under the radar. This despite a full decade of releases on British labels great and small—mostly singles and EPs, plus a 1993 album—under the moniker Krispy 3 (the group was until recently a trio). So while MCs/siblings Microphone D.O.N. and Mr. Wiz—Richard and Michael Finlayson—arrive fully formed on these shores, there's a sense of discovery listening to their US debut, which proffers a cool, thoughtful vibe and old-school flow. *From The Country* reinforces the crew's avoidance of trends. On early singles like 1991's "Destroy All The Stereotypes," Krispy overthrew preconceptions of mainstream hip-hop and of its hometown, Chorley, a presumed backwater that has produced its share of rappers but not much of a scene. The group picks up the theme on Country's "True To The Game," in which D.O.N. observes, "Commercial MCs get met from their singles/Once they go pop, they can't stop, like Pringles." But *Country* is not a boasting-and-complaining album, its mood better described by the smooth "Takin' It Easy." Krispy's relaxed musical backdrops draw you in, from mellow synths to Philly disco strings to a three-note guitar twang on "Outta Town" that paraphrases "Dust In The Wind." It's this from-anywhere-and-nowhere sound that ultimately sets Krispy apart.

>>>Chris Malachuk



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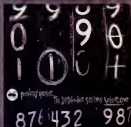


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PRODIGY PRESENT

The Ditch Chamber Sessions Volume One
A DJ mix album by Prodigy brainchild Liam Howlett. A continuous mix of Liam's favorites such as the Beastie Boys, Charlatans UK, Chemical Brothers, Sex Pistols, and many more.



SUNSCREEN • Change Or Die

Over the last six years, Sunscreen has repeatedly and simultaneously graced the UK and US dance and pop charts with #1 hits. If you've been on a dance floor since 1994, you've probably heard "Love U More". "Change Or Die", previously available as import only, includes three new cuts.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Where Is My Mind? A Tribute To The Pixies
With public awareness of The Pixies at an all time high, this may be the best time for this tribute album. Fifteen exclusive tracks from Weezer, Weston, Eve 6, Madu Star, Samiam, Superdrag, Teen Heroes, Sense Field, and more!

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- TWIST & SHOUT • Denver, CO
- UNCLE SAM'S
- Lauderhill / Pompano Beach / Miami Beach, FL
- RECORD EXCHANGE • Boise, ID
- RECORD SERVICE • Champaign, IL
- KIEP'S • Lawrence, KS
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ISSUES

FOOD

CIBO MATTO has added a Lennon and lost the food-crazy shtick—sort of—for the global fusion of *Stereotype A*. Mm-mm good.

Cibo Matto is tired of talking about food, okay? At least, that's what its principal members are telling me over a lunch of striped bass, paillard of chicken, and scrambled eggs with roe. "People would come to the interview with Twinkies and want us to eat it," says Yuka Honda, the group's DJ and producer, about the press the band garnered after its 1996 debut, *Viva La Woman*. "They thought that's what we wanted." So after a three-year period that saw Honda and singer Miho Hatori tour the world, welcome the son of a Beatle into their ranks, and ride around Brazil in Caetano Veloso's convertible, it's clear that, if nothing else, what Cibo Matto wants is to be seen not just as the Japanese Women Who Sing About Food.

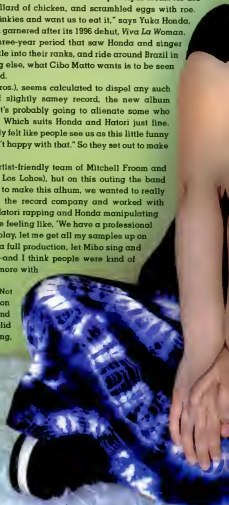
The group's new record, *Stereotype A* (Warner Bros.), seems calculated to dispel any such misimpressions. Where Cibo's debut was a fun, if slightly samey record, the new album documents the band stretching out so widely that it's probably going to alienate some who listened to the band primarily for its novelty value. Which suits Honda and Hatori just fine.


"Touring all over America, Europe, and Japan, we really felt like people see us as this little funny thing singing about food," Honda says, "and we weren't happy with that." So they set out to make a record that would challenge any prejudice.

Cibo Matto's last record was produced by the artist-friendly team of Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake (*American Music Club*, *Latin Playboys*, *Los Lohos*), but on this outing the band settled on having Honda produce. "When we decided to make this album, we wanted to really do our thing," says Honda. "When we signed with the record company and worked with professional producers, I think they kind of felt like [Hatori rapping and Honda manipulating samples] was the only thing we could do. And we were feeling like, 'We have a professional record deal, we have a budget, let's get our friends to play, let me get all my samples up on the stage instead of on my sampler.' We wanted to do a full production, let Miho sing and sing until she's really happy with her performance—and I think people were kind of afraid to let us try. And I think we could have done more with *Viva La Woman*. But, I mean, I'm happy with it."

Stereotype A, in contrast, is an artist's album. Not only does it reflect the full membership of Sean Lennon and Timo Ellis in Cibo Matto, it has the feel of a band kicking out a roomy place for itself. This record's solid musicianship and Hatori's excellent vocals (mostly sung,

Story: ANDREW BEAUJON
Photos: BRITT CARPENTER





"It's unfortunate for men to not have periods, because they can kind of lift off the ground, you know what I mean?"

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not rapped this time) should go a long way toward pulling the band out of the dreaded novelty act pigeonhole. To wit, *Stereotype A*'s early trio of lush, genre-busting songs: "Spoon," which originally appeared on the band's 1997 EP, *Super Relax*; "Flowers," which features perhaps Hatori's most direct lyric ever ("I want certain words more than a thousand flowers"), and "The Lint Of Love," which hops from R&B to hip-hop to heavy metal like a mosquito in a nudist colony. "That kind of song is actually my forte," says Honda. "I was listening to all my old songs on tape and I had a lot of songs that go through one section to another to another to another—I mean, like, six minutes long." But she's coy about how one actually writes a song like that: "When we're writing," she says, "90 percent is talking—or having snacks!"

So it's impossible to avoid talking about food, after all. Hatori and Honda enthuse about the cuisine of Jean-Georges Vongerichten, who's now known for his New York City restaurant Jean Georges, but who made his name with his earlier restaurant, Vong, which serves a fusion of French and Vietnamese cuisine—and a certain type of ice cream to which Cibo Matto paid tribute on *Viva La Woman*. "When you're eating, you don't care what kind of food it is," says Honda. "It's really about whether you like it or not. It's like music."

"I feel like America is not going to accept formula music that much," Hatori adds.



MIHO HATORI



YUKA HONDA

"You mean conceptual music?" Honda replies.

"Kind of," Hatori says. "I think we are very unique system."

"I was thinking it's unfortunate for men to not have periods, because they can kind of lift off the ground, you know what I mean?" Honda continues, taking a somewhat different tack. "It's nice to be in touch with the cycle of the moon, having to grow vegetables, you know, raising chicken and cleaning them to eat them. We can easily forget in our lifestyle today—I just kind of feel like women are a little more reminded monthly."

Spend enough time interviewing musicians and you'll find that pretty much every single one feels he or she is single-handedly breaking down all barriers between genres. It's fair enough—without that conceit, how could you keep getting out of bed in a world where you're never going to sell more records than one-trickers like Semisonic, no matter what you do? But Cibo Matto, with Stereotype A, has genuinely blurred some boundaries, while making a record that will also sound great on the radio.

"Yesterday we had this interview where the interviewer spent a half-hour trying to box us in," says Honda. "It's like, 'You must be in this genre.' That's why I was thinking it's unfortunate for men not to have periods. Sometimes people have to really understand with their head and just can't feel the music and get into it. We don't care what kind of form it's taking, whether it's Brazilian, Italian, hip-hop, heavy metal—it's just a vehicle of expressing what's inside you."

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BASEMENT JAXX

want to know the last
time you threw your
hands in the air, and
waved 'em like you
just don't care.

NEW



Story: WILLIAM WERDE
Photos: CHARLIE LANGELLA

Simon Ratcliffe and Felix Burtoot, the 27 year olds who are the Basement Jaxx, are trying to figure out what to do. They don't really have a live act yet, and in a few months, they will have a nation—a world, maybe—of electronic music fans demanding to see them.

Simon is reluctant to rush into a live performance. "We spent a long time in the studio putting lots of details into *Remedy*," he says of their first full-length album, set for an early August release on Astralwerks. "The way it's on the CD, that's the way we want it to be. And we don't want to go on stage and mime. We don't want to press 'go' on a sequencer or D&T."

"The Chemical Brothers have made it work by just kind of having their stuff play through mixing decks," reasons Felix, the more animated, lithe half of the London duo.

JAXX CITY

"People seem happy seeing that. But the idea of standing behind some equipment and not really doing anything seems kind of stupid," he adds with a laugh.

They are relish ironing out these final details, after a long journey from obscurity. All they did was buck the international techno cognoscenti, start their own Loodoo party that became so popular they had to shut it down, and now, release an album that's drawn comparisons to Daft Punk and praise from house music legends such as Armand Van Helden and Roger Sanchez.

"Hype is very dangerous," is all a wary Simon will say about the attention they're getting. "I mean, it's good that people have heard about us that haven't heard about us before. But I think some people—myself included—react negatively. It's like, 'Fuck you, you're not going to tell me decide.'"



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It's a beautiful spring day in New York's Soho, and the hype mill is grinding. The Jaxx are sipping tea and patiently entertaining what has so far been an adoring American press. Even Rolling Stone, not the most arid supporter of electronic artists, is covering the band's debut with a feature, and in the UK, Remedy has just entered the chart at number four ("Behind ABBA," muses Felix).

Last night the duo played a two-hour set to a "who's-who" crowd of the American electronica scene, orchestrated to introduce its party-rocking abilities, and it went off. There was Roger Sanchez, doing a crazy booty dance in front of the speakers. There was Moby, chatting it up and drinking a beer. Self-proclaimed techno aesthete (and Generation Ecstasy author) Simon Reynolds was looking a bit flushed as he danced all night. And all around, sweating, smiling folk were hugging each other and beaming their appreciation of these two DJs.

Call it just desserts for two Londoners who threw a good enough pub night to attract widespread notice. The Jaxx play whatever is called for, whatever they sense will get a groove going, both in their DJ sets and on Remedy. At the party they dropped a remix of the Police's "King Of Pain," Pied-Pipering the dance floor by floating a loop of the melodic refrain ("There's a little back spot in the sun today") before unleashing a booming bass line that sent everyone into a frenzy.

"For club people, it's something different," acknowledges Simon. "For a lot of people going to a club, it's like the music is a background. You've got your drugs. It's like, 'Cool. I'm looking good,'" he says, mimicking Joe Clubgoer. "I got my disco clothes on. I'm pumping away. The DJ looks cool. Everything is all right." And we don't really play along with that so much.

The Jaxx have always stressed "feeling marvelous" over "looking marvelous." They want to throw a good party. Not the sort of good party that's legendary because all the right beautiful people slip past the velvet ropes. Rather, the sort of party that leaves those present exhausted and hissing, walking out, invigorated, to a new morning. The kind of party where you smile at strangers on the dance floor because it's so damned good.

In response to what they saw as a stale London club scene in the mid-'90s, Simon and Felix patterned their own monthly party night after what they imagined the old American garage house scene would have been like: a scene flavored by the unity of otherwise marginalized gays and blacks, dancing in radiant escape to a fresh, new sound. The club grew organically, as the Jaxx advertised with small flyers and kept prices down. "I think people appreciated that," says Felix. "They weren't being told: This will be the event! We'll see you there! It'll cost loads of money! There will be these special DJs!" exhorts Felix, doing a bang-up job of mocking a typical club promoter. "We had DJs guest, but it wasn't like 'They are here tonight!' They just came and played." By the time they closed the curtain in March, guest DJs—who would play unannounced and for free—including Daft Punk,





Josh Wink and Erick Morillo.

More significant than their business model was, and is, their music. Rather than the droning, one-genre marathon sets that remain in vogue in larger clubs around the globe, Felix and Simon kept it fresh by skipping from salsa to one moment to a remixed pop song the next. "It's as if," Felix laughs, "no one told those DJs that it gets a bit boring after a while."

They would press their own tracks on acetates, some of which are now found on Remedy, to keep their sets fresh. And like Daft Punk, their music was at once a throwback and a progression, maintaining the soulful groove of classic house music, while updating it with thick filters or funk riffs. Remedy draws from all the timeless and necessary components of a house record, a house party and a house consciousness.

Check the single "Red Alert," already a hit in the UK. Vocalist Blue wails over sirens and the sound of sampled office phones and the sort of thick bass line that plucks right through you: "Ain't nothin' goin' on but history/But it's all right/Don't panic," she asserts. "The music keeps on playin' on and on." It's this essence of immortality, and of supreme confidence—even enthusiasm—in the face of drama, that was so crucial to those old house parties. The Jaxx have bottled this essence, and are releasing it today on dance floors around the world, as if to remind clubbers and partygoers that—oh yeah—it can be this good. With flamenco guitars, Latin rhythms, booming bass lines, and sonorous divas, Remedy is just that: a cure-all for the ailments of a stagnant club world.

Now that they've ridden their faith in funky, jubilant dance music to international relevance, the two no longer worry if there will be enough to pay the sound guys, and whether the friends they counted on to lend the appearance of a crowd will show. XL Recordings (the home of Prodigy) in the UK and Astralwerks (Fatboy Slim) in America won the rights to release Remedy after lengthy bidding wars. The Jaxx have ended their monthly party, to support Remedy around the world. And because, as Simon explains, they didn't want to be anybody's fashion accessory.

"It always happens to a club when it becomes popular," he laments. "You get everyone coming to watch. They aren't participating in it. They're just happy to be in that place."

"The club used to be fun for us—we could test our acetates, get drunk, make mistakes, no one cared," says Simon. "It was just a party. [Then] people started writing articles about it and it became this thing where we had to perform. They wanted to be impressed because they'd read all these articles. It was like 'The club's at a high point now. Let's leave it. It's been a good four years.'"

"Things have to evolve," agrees Felix. "And you have to be strong and say, 'That was great. Let's move on.'" **NMM**



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SHAKE FOU

L-R: DROZD, IVINS, COYNE

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"People already think we're getting grants. Warner Bros. totally thinks we get them." —Wayne Coyne

MEMO

To: The MacArthur Foundation
From: Jason Cohen

I hereby nominate the Flaming Lips.

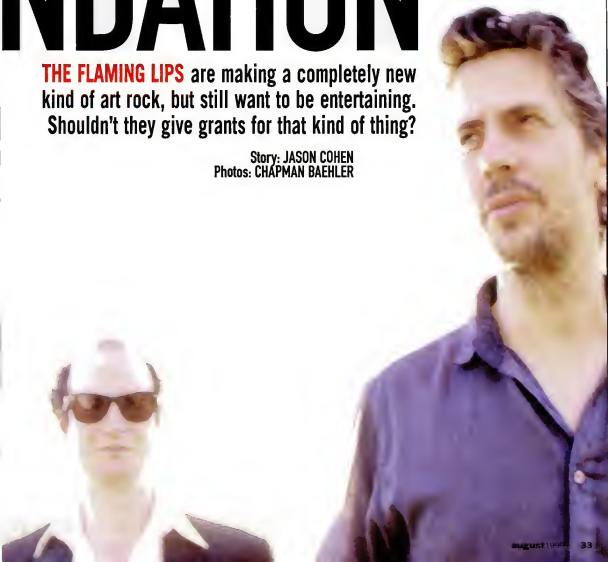
I know, I know—you're thinking that a rock band with a major label contract isn't fellowship-worthy. But ask anyone in the biz—a major label deal by itself is worth about as much as an untenured professorship. And the Lips are not just a rock band. Since its accidental '94 hit "She Don't Use Jelly," the Oklahoma trio—Pied Piperesque frontguy Wayne Coyne, seismological bassist Michael Ivins and boy wonder muso Steven Drozd—has become more fringe than ever, both commercially and artistically. The band's newest record, *The Soft Bulletin* (Warner Bros.), caps off a period in which the Lips reinvented themselves as sonic performance artists. They are creating the most adventurous, experimental and emotionally affecting work of their 15-year career, even as they heighten their devotion to concepts like joy, pure pop songs and entertainment-for-entertainment's-sake. Which, come to think of it, makes them even more radical. "It has to help that we don't take it all too seriously," Coyne says. "But we know we're doing Art. We're not trying to fake it or anything."

Since closing the book on '95's *Clouds Taste Metallic*, the Flaming Lips have been ambitious, erratic and insanely creative. There were the parking lot experiments, in which the band fashioned multi-track compositions meant to be played back by 30 to 40 car stereos: interactive symphonies of time, space and sound that were both enjoyable and communal. There were the boombox

THE FOUNDATION

THE FLAMING LIPS are making a completely new kind of art rock, but still want to be entertaining. Shouldn't they give grants for that kind of thing?

Story: JASON COHEN
Photos: CHAPMAN BAEHLER



FLAMING LIPS(cont.)

experiments, similar performances that furthered the sound manipulations, each song shaped not just by the dynamic of a 50-person "orchestra," but also by Coyne and Droad's conducting and Ivins's live mix. The experiments reached recorded fruition with 1998's *Zaireeka*, a set of four CDs designed to be heard simultaneously, the songs standing on their own merits even as they served the process.

It's all a matter of context—what if John Zorn had come up with this stuff, or if *Zaireeka* were a one-of-a-kind object that could be listened to only at a Soho gallery? But whatever one makes of the Lips as contemporary artists, *The Soft Bulletin* wouldn't exist without all that came before it. It's a staggering, large-canvas kaleidoscopic wonder, a giddy, beautiful and funereal collection of songs swimming in multiple layers of keyboards, sound effects, symphonic touches and angelic backing vocals. Certain tunes required more than 200 tracks, with 40-plus vocal overdubs. "If someone was to ask me, 'What instrument do I play?'" Coyne writes in the album's liner notes, "I would say, 'the recording studio.'"

What's most impressive about the record, however, is that amidst the scintillating twists and turns of the band's audio wizardry, the songs have an understated and provocative emotional directness, from Coyne's repeated references to the landscape of the body (wounds, death, disease, disintegration) to starkly simple (and xylophone-kissed) sentiments like "love is the greatest thing a heart can know."

That's the Lips: always fresh, always surprising, always recognizably themselves. Coyne claims the band never repeats itself only because they can get away with it. "We're not that important," he says. "We don't sell millions of records. It's not like people are going to go hungry if we change our style. So we just do what we like." Of course, even if there's never another "Jelly," Warner Bros. has some commercial prerogatives. Coyne wouldn't have it any other way. "I think it's a good thing for the label to be like, 'We love your band, but we're still wanting to make money here.' As opposed to, 'We're going to sign your band because you're great and we're going to take care of you for the rest of your life.' I don't think artists really want that. I think that's part of the dilemma of it."

Once finished, *The Soft Bulletin* presented another dilemma. Guitarist Ronald Jones quit the band after *Clouds*, while Droad, nominally the drummer, was playing more keyboards than ever

(and more guitar than Coyne, for that matter). But he could only do so much onstage. "We were talking about hiring six or seven Stevesque sort of players to play keyboards, sing, play guitar," Coyne says. "But there's really not anyone that can do that. People like Steve are rare. He's good."

"So," Coyne says—insert light bulb graphic here—"I sort of thought, 'Well, we'll just play to a CD.' We were already moving away from, 'if it's not live musicians it's obviously fake.' We decided that our recordings are what we're about. It's like, we're the Flaming Lips, and you like our records, so here we are in person. Instead of doing representations of the songs, we're doing the songs."

But that's not all. Last spring, Coyne went to see Robert Plant and Jimmy Page. "And I thought, how great would it have been if they'd just had a big old video of John Bonham doing 'When The Levee Breaks,' and they'd played over top of it," he says.

Needless to say, the Steven problem was solved. Live, Droad plays keyboards and guitar, but he also plays drums, his gigantic rhythms booming through the PA while the perfectly synced image of him banging away pops up intermittently on the video screen. Ivins contributes live bass and Coyne sticks to vocals, while also banging a gong, sprinkling the crowd with confetti and performing visual duets with various hand puppets. The video also provides a striking assortment of carefully chosen images, ranging from Leonard Bernstein conducting to unsettling surgical footage to an aerobics show from the '70s.

Paradigmatically speaking, everything about the show screams "techno." But it has the visual, visceral and aural impact of rock 'n' roll. That's quite an accomplishment. And just as crucially, it's loads of fun. "Anything you do, if you can do it to where it is entertaining, you win," Coyne says.

To that end, the Lips are spending the summer spearheading a *revue-style* tour that will also feature Sebadoh, Robyn Hitchcock and Cornelius. "Hopefully people will go home and think, 'Gosh, we got our money's worth. We really were entertained tonight.'" Coyne says. "As opposed to, 'Why'd we fucking leave the house? We missed *The X-Files!*' Because we think that all the time."

MOJO



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LIMP BIZ

Story: KURT B. REIGHLEY
Photos: CHAPMAN BAEHLER

Ain't No

Selling a million and a half records helped salve the wounds of rock's most prominent cuckold. Now, Fred Durst and his band of merry men are ready to move on with a new outlook and a new record, *Significant Other*. But is it art?

KIT

Family Picnic!



Limp Bizkit is a band comprised exclusively of straight, white men. Not long ago, you could still amend middle class to that description, too. Four-fifths of the band hail from down South, in Jacksonville, Florida. Demographically speaking, Limp Bizkit isn't part of the notorious cultural elite that has eroded America's moral fiber.

On the surface, Limp Bizkit's albums *Three Dollar Bill, Y&All\$* and the new *Significant Other* (Flip-Interscope) don't seem to merit much critical praise. The quintet's visceral mix of hard rock and hip-hop sounds rude, crude and unabashedly blunt. The possibility of king Bizkit Fred Durst's lyrics ever earning him Poet Laureate status is slim. But a hell of a lot more people recognize him at the mall.

So is Limp Bizkit's music good art? Yes. Most decidedly.

The purpose of art is to inspire, enlighten and entertain people, to help them make sense of their lives. The words and music of Limp Bizkit flush the vague questions and problems that dog average young Americans—particularly straight, white men, who need all the help they can get—out in the open. Audiences respond powerfully to Limp Bizkit because they hear their own fears and frustrations reflected in their music.

"I'm just a fan who got picked up by the security guys, and thrown on stage, and stayed there," says Fred. "I'm on the other side now, but I'm still just like you."

Fred Durst is many things. He's an accomplished tattoo artist—inking members of Korn opened doors early for his hand. He's a video director, who shot both the Bizkit's breakthrough cover of George Michael's "Faith" and its new clip "Nookie"—and like everyone in Hollywood, he's even working on his first feature. He prides himself on being as good a practicing Lutheran as somebody in his position can be. And he's a sharp-dressed man, currently sporting a furry black Kangol hat. Fortunately, he sets it aside before I embarrass us both by asking to pet his head.

"Bad things don't stop happening when you get famous. But instead of just going, 'You did this to me? Fuck you,' now sentiment's more like, 'You're doing this to me? Okay. I'll accept that you did that... and here's the result!'"

But one thing Fred Durst isn't is an elitist. For a lad whose debut sold 1.5 million copies and remains on the *Billboard* charts, and whose follow-up will undoubtedly enter in the top five, this compact headkance fanatic is remarkably down-to-earth. He takes in everything around him quietly. Fred's always squinting a tiny bit, like he's trying to see things a little more clearly.

"That's fancy looking," the singer exclaims as the waiter deposits his lunch on our table, center stage on the sunny deck of an LA hotel. "The tuna tartare looks fucking ridiculous, kids," he conspiratorially whispers into my tape recorder. "It's this tower of wontons, but they're not folded up, stacked with raw fish, water chestnuts, black things and... white things."

Even though these unidentified ingredients might be hits of broken glass and tire rubber for all he knows, Fred digs right in. "I grow up more every year, and start eating different kinds of food," observes the 28 year old. "I eat oysters now. I eat sushi! All my life, I thought, 'No way am I ever eating that shit.' But your taste buds change. And your mind changes."

And if you're in a hand, hopefully your music changes, too. For all its success, *Three Dollar Bill, Y&All\$*, recorded in just six days and before the extensive touring that cemented the group's identity, was essentially a one-trick pony. A very hitter pony smarting from the



demise of a long-term romance that had crashed and burned when Durst learned his ex-girlfriend, whom he'd heavily subsidized, was getting busy with many of his so-called friends. Poor little pony.

But *Significant Other*—which features cameos from Scott Weiland, Korn's Jonathan Davis, and even MTV talking (bald) head Matt Pinfield—actually dares to suggest there may be a few more emotions at Fred's disposal besides rage. "The first record was about anger, instant reactions to my feelings," he says. "On this record, I'm accepting everything. Bad things don't stop happening when you get famous. But instead of just going, 'You did this to me? Fuck you,' now sentiment's more like, 'You're doing this to me? Okay. I'll accept that you did that... and here's the result!'"

Fred's bluster and bellow rubs many people the wrong way, but it definitely serves a purpose. In a world where young men are still taught through example to keep a cap on their emotions, Limp Bizkit lets them know that it's okay to be hurt or hit or even vulnerable. The music may be vulgar and banal, but so are most adolescent impulses. And at least Durst has managed to get in touch with his feelings without hugging a tree, starting a drum circle, or recording one more heartfelt, DIY 7" single.

The musical improvement on *Significant Other* seems apparent to anyone who listens with open ears. Durst still hollers about getting



"I'm just a fan who got picked up by the security guys, and thrown on stage, and stayed there. I'm on the other side now, but I'm still just like you."

led around by his dick on "Nookie," but two tracks later, he cans the ranting, at least for a few minutes. "Rearranged," built upon a surprisingly melancholy groove, sees the singer simply shrugging off a bad relationship as he waves adios. On "Don't Go Off Wandering," he laments, "I can't believe how much misery comes with humility," as sobbing strings well up in the background. And when "Break Stuff" unleashes a tsunami of headbanging fury, it serves as catharsis, with the promise of building something new from the aftermath, not just pointless three-chord ranting.

"I want kids to know that you learn by your mistakes. Life is one big

lesson that keeps going and doesn't stop." Since 1997, Limp Bizkit's steady ascent has involved being savaged by the press, maligned for a pay-for-play radio gimmick [see sidebar on p. 40—Ed.] and non-stop touring. That means Fred has had to contend with a variety of unfamiliar experiences and emotions, good and bad. "If I made the same record again, what would that show my fans? What was I doing for two and a half years? Sitting around with my thumb up my ass?"

"Getting angry got me nowhere," concludes Fred of Three Dollar Bill, Y'all's. "So on this record, I'm at the next level. And by the next record, who knows how I'm going to deal with anything in my life. But as time goes, fans go and bands go. They grow, we grow."

When Limp Bizkit discusses its devotees, the band remains acutely aware of the symbiotic relationship it shares with its crowd. The bond the group has formed with audiences via its explosive live shows and the MTV triumph of "Faith" is an essential ingredient in its creative process.

"We're totally blessed by God, because a lot of our fans are kids, who are just now getting into music for the first time," Fred acknowledges, brushing crumbs from his goatee. The artists and songs of adolescence become ground zero for an individual's taste, setting the tone for the rest of his days. "Your life so far has been a movie without a soundtrack, but once you start getting into music, it becomes your world."

"Today, when I hear Jane's Addiction or KISS or Eric B. & Rakim, it takes me back to exactly that time, even though I still like those guys now." It astonishes Fred to think that for a generation of teenagers, his music will have the same effect.

Limp Bizkit hasn't forgotten the level of intensity youngsters can bring to their devotion. "You look at every inch of the CD booklet a million times," he rhapsodizes, obviously familiar with the sensation. Fred Durst,

PAY FOR PLAY: MUCH ADD ABOUT NOTHING?

Radio sucks. It's a familiar refrain, and one that can be heard in every town and in every city in every state. Yet we still listen to the radio habitually, choosing our favorite stations, even pre-setting them into our car and home stereos to get instant access. This means that radio remains powerful, and it can make or break a band more quickly, more cleanly than any other medium.

In early 1988, Limp Bizkit hoped that it would become radio's latest beneficiary. When its single "Counterfeit" popped up on the playlist at KUFO, a station in Portland, Oregon, Fred Durst and his bandmates looked like they were on their way to fame and fortune. But Limp Bizkit's song didn't spread to other stations. Instead, it brought the band to the front page of the *New York Times* as a symbol of something called "Pay for Play." Suddenly, this tough-looking livesome was being ridiculed as a guinea pig.

What had occurred was an unusual but seemingly legal deal in which Limp Bizkit's labels, Flip and Interscope, paid KUFO \$5,000 to play 50 promotional spins of "Counterfeit." The song was identified on the air by a brief announcement saying that it had been paid for by the labels, thus staying within Federal Communications Commission (FCC) boundaries regarding disclosure.

The concept, however, sounded similar to the infamous late-'50s/early '60s payola scandals, when popular disc jockey Alan Freed and others were accused of taking bribes to spin records. Within days of the news about Limp Bizkit's pay-for-play, reporters besieged KUFO program director Dave Numme with calls. "I feel like the poster child for something," he said at the time.

Numme, who orchestrated the deal, saw KUFO's relationship with Limp Bizkit as a test case that would challenge the status quo of radio promotion. It's often said that radio's dirty little secret is that the program and music directors who choose the songs for their station's playlists aren't exactly unbiased; these tastemakers get flown to far-off concerts, wined and/or dined so that they'll be convinced to add a single to their playlist. The stakes are high. A hit song propels album sales faster than a tour or a magazine article or even an MTV video.

Since this wheeling and dealing goes on behind the scenes, Numme thought why not be up front with listeners and say, hey, we're getting paid to play this cool new song. Critics pointed out the financial motivation: Because the FCC allows only 10 minutes of ads per hour, the pay-for-play deal seemed like a shady way to get around the rules in the name of increasing the almighty corporate bottom line.

The whole deal could have become a public relations fiasco for Limp Bizkit, which at the time had experienced scant sales of its debut, *Three Dollar Bill, Yall!*. But the media furor over pay-for-play subsided when the practice didn't become widespread, and Limp Bizkit went about its business, touring the country and landing on playlists based on its growing popularity. In a masterstroke of irony, the band that many tried to point as a corporate sellout became one of 1988's homegrown success stories, with 1.5 million happy record owners saying "Amen."

Now, Limp Bizkit's second album, *Significant Other*, and latest single, "Nookie," command respect on their own terms, points out Jim Kerr, alternative music editor of the trade magazine *Radio & Records*. "Programmers aren't saying 'Pay us to play it,'" he quips. "They're saying, 'We want to play it.'" >>>Richard Martin



rock star, remains firmly in touch with his inner suburban teen, the one who pored over every second of "Three Days" by Jane's Addiction. "You listen to everything in the music. If you hear one little weird thing in the left speaker, you go, 'What is that? They did that on purpose!'"

"Mistakes and faults are good," says guitarist Wes Borland later, elaborating on the topic of weird details that catch the ear. "We're sitting in a suite upstairs, flanked by the rest of the band: bassist Sam Rivers, drummer John Otto and DJ Lethal. 'They'll add texture to a record. Sometimes a mistake will become important to the point where you go back and change everything else, instead of fixing the mistake.'"

The recording of *Significant Other* allowed much more time for such happy accidents. Although a lot of the songs were written on the road, another three weeks were spent in pre-production, before entering the studio. "We wanted to challenge ourselves and do something that had more musical dimension," explains Wes. "Playing heavy music, and writing heavy riffs, all of the time, is so very easy, because..."

"Because there's only six chords in the world of heavy metal," Lethal interjects with a grin.

"Piling on as much distortion and as many effects as possible, and playing as loud as you can, is just a diversion," Wes continues. "I'm not bashing tastefully-used [guitar effects] at all, but if you heard most of those bands plugged in completely clean, through a little speaker, with no reverb, it would sound like..." And suddenly, he lets out a noise like the Taco Bell chihuahua crammed in a blender. The other boys explode with laughter.

As one might expect from a band that opened its '88 OzzFest dates by climbing out of a giant toilet, Limp Bizkit peppers its exchanges with jokes that are about as subtle as skid marks on a pair of white boxers. At one point, just as Otto stuffs a handful of chocolate-covered pretzels in his crew, Borland reminds him of a scatological gag from *Mallrats* that involved the same snack. A minute later, the drummer is out on the balcony, trying to calculate the odds of hitting patrons on the patio, seven stories below, with a remarkably ugly football.

And talk of the new record is almost completely detailed after Borland recounts episodes from his recent bachelor party. "As soon as I walked in the door, there were ten guys standing all around me, each holding up a different bottle of hard liquor." They surrounded him, and played Spin The Wes. "I'd open my eyes and there'd be Captain Morgan's or Goldschlager in front of me," and the groom dutifully consumed however many shots his well-wishers administered. And then the girls, courtesy of Fred, showed up.

"They found the worst strippers... these bad trip women," moans Borland, choking back the ghastly vision. "I don't they should even be called women. They got naked and were covered with scars, and hair in bad places, and they tried to get me to start doing stuff with them." He launches into a slack-jawed Southern accent. "Why don't you wam' some? Don't you like gurls?"

"Thank God that, because of the shots, I had to vomit immediately," he chuckles. "It was a good party."

But as hinted at by Borland's earlier comment about aiming for more "dimension" on *Significant Other*, the musical dynamic of Limp Bizkit is a lot more complicated than its locker room humor. Otto, for example, credits his piano background as an important influence. "I can hear him playing melodies on the drums," concurs Borland. Meanwhile Lethal, who cut his teeth in House Of Pain (the Bizkit covers HOP's big hit "Jump Around" in concert) and produced the first Sugar Ray album, acts more like a second guitarist or keyboard player, eschewing traditional scratches, and pumping his arsenal of sound through guitar pedals and a Marshall amp stack. And Wes barely even thinks of himself as a guitar player.

"I'm good at creating ideas while using a guitar in a new way, but it takes me a long time. I can't just come up with stuff fast and rip it up." If anything, Borland's playing owes more to his background in—

"I'm a pain in the ass for everybody who works for me, without a doubt."

are you listening in the mosh pit?—art school. "I think about constructing songs, and even riffs, the same way as a painting, putting on a little hit at a time. They're sketchy at first, and then I know what I want, and I fit notes into places."

The longer Limp Bizkit discusses its convoluted compositional process, the fact that the band finished a second album, let alone one that kicks ass compared to its monochromatic debut, seems increasingly remarkable. "I don't feel like we were pressured, or did anything we weren't completely happy with on this record," says Wes. But pushing any given track out of the nest was nigh impossible. "Are we finished with this, or just abandoning it?" they wondered time and again.

Otto is a little more succinct: "We are all completely anal about every fucking note of music."

"Our record's not even out yet, and I can think of ten ways to fix every song," Fred confesses. "We should just push the release back a month. I'll go back in and do this and this..." I'm a pain in the ass for everybody who works for me, without a doubt."

But if you can clearly see what your final product should be like, doesn't that imply that your vision was limited from the outset? Fred nods his assent. "I've always wondered about those people who say, 'Okay, we're done. We've got a masterpiece.' I'm still thinking. Damn, there are going to be kids listening to every inch of this: every sound, every word, every interlude. They'll know the sequence by heart." It's hard for me to comprehend that I'm finished with a product that's going to be affecting people's lives for a long time."

The best example of Limp Bizkit's nit-picky perfectionism didn't even make the final cut for *Significant Other*. "Turn Me Loose," which features Fred swapping rhymes with overnight sensation Eminem, over a riff lifted from the old Loverboy hit, was scrapped after the guys felt they'd lost the plot. "The rhymes were on time," insists the singer, "but we weren't 100 percent sure about the music." Never mind that they could have probably racked up a #1 hit regardless; the guys have opted to wait and return to the tune when they can get it right, then put it out on a B-side or soundtrack.

And as Fred readily admits, it wouldn't have looked too cool if a pair of melanin-deficient rappers had dropped a track that didn't slam. "We're two white guys rapping in a hip-hop world," he points out. Not that Durst should be overly concerned these days. On *Significant Other*, the hip-hop elements sound both more organic and

more pronounced, and Fred boasts sufficient flow to go toe-to-toe with Method Man on "N2gether."

Fred Durst may be a hero to the 20th century's last graduating class of straight white men, but the increasing popularity of the stylistic hybrid that's elevated him to that station should serve as proof that the racism—blatant, sublimated or otherwise—that was once a component of the mass media landscape may be on its way out for good.

As essential as hip-hop is to the pop charts today, not too long ago Durst dealt with violence on a daily basis simply for being a cracker with a taste for rap. "I listened to everything growing up," he explains. "But this was small town North Carolina. So even though I listened to KISS and Ratt and A Flock Of Seagulls, I was hated by some of my white friends because I also liked Michael Jackson and Donna Summer and Sugarhill Gang."

Regardless, he didn't let such flak deter him from spending time with his black friends, going to parts of town other white kids never saw. "There were people that fucked with me, and were always hunting me down, wanting to beat the shit out of me. When I'd show up at a party or a game, the jocks and major people who didn't hang out with blacks would always gang up on me." His face softens suddenly. "I'd like to know what those people are doing, and if they got my record."

Considering that Durst hopes to grow old in a society where apartheid and the KKK are just ugly, faded memories, it seems especially unfortunate that select lyrics have gotten him branded a sexist and a homophobe. "If people knew how much I love women, and how much women have destroyed my life..." he trails off. If they've listened to your lyrics, they probably do, Fred. "I'm the guy that takes how after how, then goes back and forgives," he reiterates for anyone who wasn't paying attention on the first album. [\(continued on page 60\)](#)

Left-handed.



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.



AUTECHRE
EP7

Warp-Nothing

From the next room comes the chipper hip of electronic beats and pulses. And yet, they sound somehow... distressed. You race to the stereo, terrified your kid brother, the turntablist, has taken a Brillo™ pad to your vintage Kraftwerk vinyl. Breathe easy—he's just playing the latest from Manchester duo Autechre. Calling a 62-minute release an EP is ambitious, but Roh Brown and Sean Booth aren't big on linear time. Want proof? Try "Outpt.," where the sonic ebb and flow conjures up a sense of motion through a space, but not towards set cadences,

culminating in a disorienting 3-D experience. Contrasted to Autechre's recent *LPS*, glimpses of EP7, such as the hip-hop inflections of "Rrpeg," exhibit a tenuous allegiance to old-fashioned notions like repetitive melodies and fixed rhythms. But just barely. The zippy "Licclii" threatens to skitter right out of the speakers like liquid mercury. Occasionally, tones with physical counterparts in the material world (fragments of human voices, bells and chimes) pop up, but mostly Booth and Brown remain content to craft timbres that spark the imagination by providing no easy emotional cues. EP7 has more in common with eating Grape Nuts cereal than listening to other recording artists: it's a tactile experience that favors texture over familiar flavors, with remarkably fortifying results.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley

BERTINE
Morbid Latentlight Show

Network

At home in Oslo, Norway, Bertine (her seemingly unnecessary last name is Zeltitz) is quite the Renaissance woman: She hosts a popular TV show and is trained in martial arts and dancing. Now she's carried that ambition over to her debut album, which shows off Bertine's striking vocals in a variety of styles. The good news is that the disc never sounds same-y; the bad news is that some tracks work better than others. The opener, "Apples And Diamonds," slinks around with lounge-y, breezy electronics that perfectly complement Bertine's tale of looking for a fling. She can take an unexpected phrase—"Snow on a hot day, hot day, cool"—and have you repeating it like a mantra. But on a few songs she seems to be trying a little too hard to capture the angst of troubled young women, as on the capella "Little Rosie" or the overly-orchestrated "Butcher's Son." Throughout, Bertine's programmer, Jan Bang, keeps things interesting with electronic atmospherics—bouncy club beats, snippets of drum 'n' bass on "Apples And Diamonds" and funky beats on "Colour Me." As a singer, Bertine is consistently captivating. As a songwriter, her most powerful moments actually occur when she's not taking herself too seriously.

>>>Wendy Mitchell

BLACK BOX RECORDER
England Made Me

Jetset

Gays like Luke Haines were supposed to be happy when Tony Blair's triumph signaled the return to power of the more liberal-minded Labor Party in an England that had been ruled for two decades by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party. Instead, Haines, who spent the first half of the '90s singing wry, hook-laden social commentaries in the Brit-pop trio the Auteurs, greeted the new regime by launching a band whose view on life in England wasn't brightened in the least by Blair's "Cool Britannia" campaign, meant to update crusty old

England's public image. Also a trio—with onetime Jesus And Mary Chain drummer Josh Moore sharing instrumental duties with Haines, and Sarah Nixey handling lead vocals—Black Box Recorder retains the Auteurs' penchant for tasteful pop arrangements and for lyrics that chronicle the hidden horrors of everyday life. In the creepy "Child Psychology," quiet spoken-word verses about a six-year-old girl who stops talking to everyone segues into a somewhat more upbeat sounding chorus adorned with the line, "Life is unfair/Kill yourself or get over it," the coyest reference to suicide in a pop songs since the "Only Ones" "Why Don't You Kill Yourself." And the disc's title track finds the sweet voiced Nixey fighting boredom by fantasizing about committing murder.

>>>Matt Ashare

CAKE LIKE
Goodbye, So What

Vapor-Warner Bros.

The original premise of Cake Like went something like this: three hip chicks from NYC who couldn't necessarily play their instruments very well but who did have solid day jobs (one as an off-Broadway actress, another working for designer Donna Karan, and the third in the MTV comedy troupe The State) record an album for John Zorn's label with production help from Girls Against Boys' Eli Janney and Shudder To Think's Craig Wedren. Hell, there were enough hooks there to outfit a meat locker even without hearing the album. Unfortunately, by the time the group's second album, *Bruiser Queen*, came out, Cake Like was dangling somewhere between being a joke novelty act and a serious rock band, and not really pulling off either. Well, another couple years have gone by and Cake Like is back with its third album (its second for Neil Young's Vapor imprint). Nobody's going to accuse the trio of being instrumental virtuosos, but these gals do write great little skewed pop tunes with the same sort of angular guitars riffs and deceptively simple vocal arrangements that made the Breeders such a gas. Kenney hasn't lost her sense of humor—"My Guy" finds her having fun with automotive metaphors—but she's wisely jettisoned comedy routines like *Bruiser Queen*'s "Mr. Fireman" because, well, unless you're yanking for Weird Al's turf, novelty acts work best when they're new.

>>>Matt Ashare



OUT:
June 22
FILE UNDER:
Inaudible electronics.
R.I.V.Y.L.:
Apex Inv, Microtunes, Passaic.



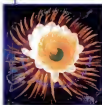
OUT:
April 20
FILE UNDER:
Electronic LBJs fans.
R.I.V.Y.L.:
Lala Music, Neomphonic, Seoul
S'Center, Beth Orton.



OUT:
July 6
FILE UNDER:
Pretzel pop.
R.I.V.Y.L.:
Auteurs, Reader Weiser,
Tenderloins.



OUT:
June 22
FILE UNDER:
Smart, saucy and skewed.
R.I.V.Y.L.:
Breeders, Venice Salt, Lit Phat.

**OUT:**

May 4

FILE UNDER:

Psychedelic, instrumental soundscapes.

R.I.V.L.:

Irvine, Cal., 1970s Miles Davis.

CUL DE SAC**Crashes To Light** Minutes To The Fall
Thirsty Ear

Avant-garde Boston art-rock band Cul De Sac has been termed ambient in numerous descriptions since the band's debut in the early 1980s. That epithet is often a code word for staid or just plain boring, but nothing could be farther from the truth in this case: Cul De Sac is exciting, adventurous and vital, as it proves once again on the excellent *Crashes To Light*. Once again, guitarist Glenn Jones is a constant marvel, one minute threading his pointillist lead lines through a series of melodic shifts and the

next searing the listener with an eruption of squalls reminiscent of Ennio Morricone's spaghetti Westerns. Jones has a wide-ranging style, and he is evocative of everyone from his idol John Fahey to Jerry Garcia. "*Crashes To Light*" also features the rest of Cul De Sac in rare form: Keyboardist Robin Amos takes advantage of the current thrill with vintage keyboards to create eerie, lurching backdrops and drummer Jon Proudman lays down consistently propulsive beats that straddle the line between rhythm and lead. "K" is one of the album's best songs, as Jones picks cascading figures set atop a bubbling foundation; the surf-tinged "Far Off, The Fabulous Iron Serpent Whistles" is also a gem, featuring Jones's catchiest lines as well as the album's best song title. >>>Seth Maackin

**OUT:**

May 11

FILE UNDER:

Bay Area beat-loaf instrumentalizations.

R.I.V.L.:

DJ Shadow, Deeper Concentration compilations, Amon Tobin.

EL STEW**El Stew**

Om

On paper, El Stew looks like the type of half-assed, one-off project that connects with no one and clutters up the marketplace. The five-man collaboration features Bay Area denizens such as DJ "Phonoscychograph" Disk of the Invisibl Skratch Picklz crew, Prismus drummer Brain, and renowned guitar freak Buckethead, and it seems based on the notion that such a meeting of the minds—a "stew"—is intriguing in and of itself (even though nobody really likes stew). All that aside, this disc approaches divine inspiration. It's a dark, diffuse run of the musical gamut

with a hip-hop heart and a sewed-in soul. Disk conducts from behind the turntables, spinning and scratching out all manner of sonic detritus—including lots of clever, pilfered samples—to accompany the electronic doodling, serious instrumentation and fluid beats. Much of it is a stoner's dream, like the mellifluous "Arab Mafia," with its Eastern-sounding guitar and laid-back flow, or the squiggly "Dim Slim," in which Buckethead sounds like Jerry Garcia fronting the Beat Junkies. Even when the vibe grows foreboding, as on the swooping and in-yer-face "Darkside Whiplash," these boys temper the onslaught with a silly sample of a guy saying, "Yeah, I kinda wanted that soft taco." The out-of-left-field sample also dismantles the tension, underscoring that El Stew is a display of mad skills, not some hastily conceived joke. >>>Richard Martin

**OUT:**

May 25

FILE UNDER:

Bride of the east.

R.I.V.L.:

Mî Farûk Yûsuf, Sandy Bull, Hassan Hakseem, Kronos Quartet.

HAMZA EL DIN**A Wish**

Sounds True

This emotional disc from the veteran master of the oud (a 12-stringed fretless lute) drops hints that this wish is actually more of a longing. In 1964, Hamza El Din's Sudanese village, Toebka, quickly became the bottom of Lake Nasser when the Aswan High Dam stemmed the Nile. Hamza may be resigned that his geographic home is forever buried, but by his liner notes and choice of lyrics, it's clear that his yearning for its cultures and traditions to thrive is undiminished. Even though Hamza El Din has gained notoriety

playing with the likes of the Grateful Dead and Kronos Quartet (whose Joan Jeanrenaud makes a cameo here), his music always retains its expressive, traditional core. A haunting duet with the Japanese vocalist Shizuru Obataka relates a tale of a sort of Nubian Romeo and Juliet, who must divorce because of a dispute between their neighboring families. They can now communicate their passions only through a shared wall. The subtext is as heavy as Nile Delta humidity. Traditional lyrics borrowed from Nubian and Arabic poets give these hypnotic tunes a sense of deep desire. On the instrumentals, Hamza El Din's playing, a mixture of gutsy, bluesy plucks and more erudite Middle Eastern scales, is equally poetic. >>>Steve Ciabattani

Right-handed.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.



IBRAHIM FERRER
Buena Vista Social Club Presents
Nonesuch

This album can rightly be termed both a spin-off of Ry Cooder's hugely successful showcase of Cuban musicians and a vital link to the Cuban musical heritage of the 1950s. Cooder's 1997 album Buena Vista Social Club, which won a Grammy, showcased a series of mellifluous Cuban singers; the 72-year-old Ferrer, with his ballad style and silky inflection, was unquestionably the star of the group. On his solo debut—the singer has never been famous in his native Cuba—Ferrer plays the chivalrous Latin lover to

perfection. Some of the best songs here, such as "Herido De Sombras" and "Aquellos Ojos Verdes," are ballads where Ferrer is hooked by a string section and a female vocal quintet. On other tunes, Ferrer revitalizes the Banda Gigante (big band) style made famous by Beny More, utilizing an eight-piece horn section (on two of these songs, More's original arranger, now 80 years old, lends his talents). The album's best song, "Marieta," is a spirited call-and-response duet with Teresita Garcia Caturla that also features one of Cooder's typically breathtaking guitar leads. Indeed, the musicianship on this album is consistently stunning: In addition to Cooder, pianist Ruben Gonzalez is featured, as is the entire rhythm section from the original Buena Vista sessions.

>>>Beth Moskita



G. LOVE AND SPECIAL SAUCE ★
Philadelphonic Epic

When Garrett Dutton, a.k.a. G. Love, landed in 1994 with the debut *G. Love And Special Sauce*, he sounded like the Beastie Boys' backwoods cousin: a funk-soul brother with rascally humor, influenced by hip-hop but hatching his own rustic rhythms. Just as the Beasties matured, though, G. Love has gradually expanded on the dirty, gooty tone of his debut, adding a palette of folk and acoustic funk. To G. Love's credit, on *Philadelphonic*, *Special Sauce's* fourth album, he enriches his sound while still not taking himself seriously. So for song, the album is a

study in the meanings of the word groove. It can mean the polyrhythmic grunge-funk of "Roachies" or "Dreamin'," both reminiscent of the old sound. It can mean "Rock And Roll." G. Love's loving (if strangely titled) tribute to hip-hop heroes, from KRS-One to Big Daddy Kane. Then again, groove can mean quieter, more deliberate: the slide guitar and reggae sway of "Honor And Harmony," the leisurely "Relax" and "Love," or the meditative "Numbers." The latter shows how far G. Love has evolved: Its title a reference to the Bible, "Numbers" offers a jazzy guitar figure, harmony vocals, and G. Love hopping between rapid-fire raps and a more unguarded croon, pleading for a better day "someday soon." Whether singing about loose women or a mystifying world, he never forgets to keep his head bobbing.

>>>Chris Mohaupt



FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY
Implode Metropolis

If nothing else, Front Line Assembly is reliable. You can almost set your watch to the regularity with which, almost every year for the last 15 years, FLA has turned out a new batch of sinister, synth-driven melodies. And in the ever-mutating world of electronic music, Front Line Assembly has resolutely stuck to its guns, gradually allowing more techno and metal elements into its music but mostly honing the classic industrial-dance formula the band helped pioneer in the mid-to-late '80s (and that was subsequently made famous by Trent

Reznor). *Implode* doesn't do much to change the pattern; like its predecessors, it's full of layers of colliding synths, sampled noise, and Bill Lee's strangled-sounding vocals. If there is anything remarkable about *Implode*, it's that a number of the tracks see the group slowing down, working more of a Depeche Mode-ish death-disco groove. That's a good decision—it recalls some of FLA's finest moments, like 1992's *Tactical Neural Implant* and *Karma*, the band's 1997 experiment with world-beat ambience (recorded as *Delerium*). FLA has worked its up-tempo aggro formula almost to shreds, but what always set it far apart from the indus-to-rabble was its ability to write a hummable yet subtle and elegant minor-key melody, and that's still in fine form on *Implode's* downbeat tracks.

>>>David Jarman



GUITAR WOLF
Jet Generation Metalator

Worshiping at the whiskey- and bloodstained altar of the most primal and grungy old-school garage-punk is nothing new for this raucous trio from Osaka, Japan. Seiji (a.k.a. guitarwolf), Billy (a.k.a. bosswolf), and Toru (a.k.a. drumwolf) have already dedicated five previous full-lengths to the fevered pursuit of their own trashy take on the American dream: beer, barre chords, and the Bowery blues, with a little kung-fu fighting thrown in to distinguish Guitar Wolf from other like-minded rock 'n' roll animals. It's the other Americana, the gritty urban one that gets left out of No

Depression's rural romanticism. On *Jet Generation*, Guitar Wolf offers its most perfectly interpreted of three-chords-and-a-bad-attitude, from amphetamine-fueled Chuck Berry leads to the self-explanatory "Kung Fu Ramones" to the furious thrashing of Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues," all mixed so far into the analog red that you can almost feel the tape being shredded by Seiji's huzz-sawing chords as the studio's Dolby Noise Reduction unit goes up in flames. *Jet Generation's* white-noise foreground of humming tube amps, piercing bursts of feedback, and low-end rumble is enough to place Guitar Wolf in a league with ironic avant-gardists like "White Light/White Heat" Velvet and Pussy Galore. But the blanket of fuzz production is nothing more fancy than a reflection of Guitar Wolf's unabashed desire to go all the way.

>>>Matt Adams

KRISTIN HERSH

Sky Motel

4AD

Until now, Kristin Hersh locked away her electric guitars for her solo releases, saving them for Throwing Muses albums, and the spare acoustic "Kristin Hersh" persona avoided the frantic electric crunch of "Throwing Muses" songs. But after last year's beguiling collection of bedtime Appalachian murder ballads, *Murder, Misery And Then Goodnight*, which was starkly solo, and after the official demise of the Throwing Muses, *Sky Motel* hurls those lines—a bit. Although the album still favors acoustic guitars and drummer-less settings, it goes electric, too. Songs such as

the brief "Fog" and the full-bodied "Echo" would fit comfortably on a Muses album. Although it sacrifices some of her elliptical charms, enigmatic juxtapositions and provocative images, *Sky Motel* lacks the claustrophobic that Hersh's work sometimes produces, willfully or not, and allows in some air and contrast, both lyrically and musically. In "A Cleaner Light," Hersh sings, "I wake up feeling fragile/it's nothing the TV couldn't cure, or lying here for my whole life/But in a cleaner life, it's okay": the lines balance unforbearing self-examination with a slight optimism, hooked to a melody hearkening back to the Muses' early days (and setting up a hating putdown of psychoanalytic listeners—and writers). Although no dramatic departure, *Sky Motel* houses the startling drama of all sides of Hersh's musings. >>>Steve Kline

HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS

Too Much Fun!

Rounder

None harnessed the essence of the *Anthology Of American Folk Music* better than the Holy Modal Rounders, whose mid-'60s work with the Fugs resulted in arguably the first punk rock, and whose *Indian War Whoop* from 1967 stands as one of the most added and raucously alive documents of the '60s. To wit, punk: Sing, moan, shout for joy, scream in terror, howl, flap your wings like a dervish while scratching at your violin and poking at your banjo—it doesn't matter, as long as you feel the spirit of the music. Since then, the

Rounders, who are core members Peter Stampfel and Steve Weber, along with longtime collaborator Dave Reich, have done just that on a dozen or so records. *Too Much Fun!*, their first record in 20 years, could have been made at any point in their career: a few originals, a few traditional numbers and a token Michael Hurley song (Hurley recorded the glorious *Have Moicy* with them in the mid-'70s), just as on *Indian War Whoop*, all picked out on banjo, acoustic guitar and violin. Assessing "quality" when dealing with the Holy Modal Rounders is a ridiculous proposition, besides the fact that it misses the point. Is it any good? Hell yeah, man. How could anything so alive and joyous be anything but?

>>>Randall Roberts



OUT:

July 20.

FILE UNDER:

Cry me a record.

R.I.Y.L.:

Richard Thompson's *Yes, Mr. No*, In La Jolla's *Fadedout*, Bob Dylan's *Along the Trenches*.**FREEDY JOHNSTON**

Blue Days, Black Nights

Elektra

Like short story writer Eban Coen, Freedy Johnston crawls into the heads of wonderfully unique characters—lonesome astronomers, mortician's daughter, a pilot's son whose afraid to fly—and describes the tiny details of place and feeling. And although his songbook is as passionate and emotive as that of any sensitive balladeer, Johnston's recent albums haven't resonated with the same simple power as his intimate live shows, partly due to his choice of producers. On 1994's *This Perfect World*, Butch Vig seemed more interested in proving he could make a slick singer-songwriter album after producing *Nevermind* than in serving the songs. On '97's *Never Home*, Danny Kortchmar rubbed away the gorgeous depth of Johnston's songs in a misguided appeal to VH-1. But on *Blue Days*, Johnston's fifth album, T-Bone Burnett and Roger Moutenot give Freedy's songs the kind of space they deserve, and don't airbrush his distinctively beautiful high-pitched voice. And Johnston delivers a heart-stilling, deeply empathetic collection of songs that feels more pained and confused than any since his '92 set *Can You Fly*, with his trademark downcast, descending melodies. Johnston ends with the weeper "Emily," painfully pleading as a relationship dies, "Look at me baby, it's me," before concluding, mournfully, "Sorry." >>>David Deley



OUT:

July 13.

FILE UNDER:

The old, weird America.

R.I.Y.L.:

Michael Hurley, Fugs, *Anthology Of American Folk Music*.**Gravity.****New Slide Box.**

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PAUL JONES
Pucker Up Buttercup Fat Possum-Epithet

If you're already familiar with Mississippi bluesman Paul Jones, one of the crown jewels of the Fat Possum roster, you've probably got one burning question at this point: What the heck happened to Paul "Wine" Jones? Why did he abandon his beloved "Wine"? And look at him! Gone is the sneering, badass Jones wielding his guitar like a shotgun; this cover photo has him grinning in his Sunday best, thoughtful enough to bring flowers, and calling us "Buttercup"! Well, not to worry. Pucker Up may feature the likes of "Lead Me On," a bare-bones spiritual—no

OUT:
July 13.
FILE UNDER:
Rascal with your deers, Delta style.
R.I.Y.L.:
Kevon Edg Taylor, Cash Money, Eric Williams & Heathcliff Early, R.L. Barrios.

kidding—that's anchored by Jones's soulful howlers of love for Jesus, but he's still fighting off the temptations of the flesh. In fact, it seems that Jones's new, improved veneer has only served to force every last bit of his earthy bite into his music. Pucker Up is raw and nasty even by Fat Possum standards, and Jones's playing, already a wonder of seamless rhythm playing punctuated by meaty leads, is even more dense, more complex, and just plain old faster and louder than before—facts further emphasized by the intensity and skill of his acoustic playing on a few of the album's songs. By the closing stomp of "Guess I'm Gonna Fuck Things Up," you'll know that Jones's quest for spiritual goodness has only helped him channel his mortal badness, and the ultimate winner is the blues. >>>Cheryl Botchick

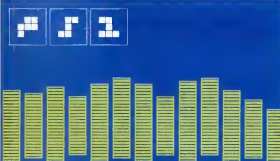


JUNE OF 44
Anahata
Quarterstick

On its fifth release, June Of 44 seems to be trying too hard to up its Chicago hometown's post-rock ante, jettisoning all vestiges of indie rock convention. Anahata aims for a melding of Tortoise's ambient grooves and Shellac's anticathartic assault. The band reaches its intended terrain, but misplaces much of its forebears' charms along the journey. The quartet's taut precision is impressive, as a jam-heavy rhythm section dominates the mix and avoids standard 4/4 structures like an infectious disease. Sean Meadows and Jeff Mueller

OUT:
June 6.
FILE UNDER:
Jam-heavy math rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Tortoise, Shellac, Gash Del Sol, recent Fugazi.

intertwine their guitar lines in a fashion that at times suggests an updated King Crimson. The tightly wound bombast also recalls high-minded punk acts like Fugazi or The Ex. Bassist Fred Erskine's occasional bursts of trumpet amid a stark percussive setting bring to mind the 1970s avant workouts of Miles Davis. Generally, June Of 44's instrumental backing is sufficiently interesting, if a bit lacking in payoff. The vocals, unfortunately, are another story. The band's tactic of fleetly shouting its lyrics, often in unison, detracts from the musical backdrop, even for a critic with a wide tolerance for unconventional singers. June Of 44 has rocked out before; a looser, less clinical approach would sell its sonic experiments more successfully. >>>Glen Sarvady



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KATIES ★
The Katies
Spongebath-Elektra

If Alex Chilton didn't get the irony in naming his band Big Star, he figured it out pretty fast. Power-pop is a crueler mistress than murdered JFK paramour Mary Meyer. A knack for writing Beatles-esque melodies leads only to broken hearts in the end. Just ask the Posies or Tommy Keene. Recently, however, bands have realized that ratcheting up the power side of the power-pop equation might lead to a modern-rock moment. It worked for Superdrag, and now that band's Tennessee neighbors the Katies are poised to grab their one-hit wonder.

OUT:
July 13.
FILE UNDER:
Who sucked out the feeling?
R.I.Y.L.:
Cheap Trick, Material Issue, Third Eye Blind.

Trouble is, they've learned the wrong lessons from their Cheap Trick records, and obliterated their hooks and melodies with a super-produced sheen of rock bombast—sing-along gang vocals and guitar riffs nicked from that old "Freedom Rock" commercial. It's too rehearsed to be ironic, too sincere to be any fun, and too poorly written to just turn up and let rock. "Powerkiss" makes one yearn for the subtlety of "Detroit Rock City," and "Drowner" shamelessly nicks the opening bass rumble of the Breeders' "Cannonball." Their single's called "Noggin' Poundin'" and it's all maximum riffage, big, dumb drum breaks, and squealing solos that ends with a final flourish. But that may be the point: All this blustering bravado is the stuff commercial radio stars are made of. >>>David Delay

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PRAGA KHAN ☆
Twenty First Century Skin
Artist: Subway-Never

Praga Khan (a.k.a. Maurice Engelen) might have been remembered as the techno generation's Marquis de Sade—the Lord of Acid who during techno's toddler stages helped couple rave's spiritual revelations with man's carnal cravings, engineering the first sonic equivalent of an Ecstasy-Viagra cocktail. But Khan's force has grown a tad flaccid over time and the Belgian dance don is in danger of becoming the genre's Pamela Anderson: a titillating attraction to some; a synthetic, trilling exaggeration of extremes to many others. His latest offering, *Twenty*

First Century Skin, uses a blueprint similar to those of earlier efforts, though his trademark cross, ovaturistic synth-onies have been relaxed into warm acid-house hooks and sensual trip-hop textures. But the laughable lewdness and sexual hyperbole that made his work with the Lords so legendary now suggests the notebook scribbles of a horny, hyperactive adolescent—any 16-year-old with half a libido could script more amorous come-ons than "I don't have a clue/I don't know what to do/But I'm in love with you." The collection would have benefited from the exclusion of such lyrics, allowing Khan's rudimentary, yet redeeming musical maturity to take center stage. Instead, you're left hanging with sturdy, rave-ready riffs but impotent introspections. "Cock tease" is putting it nicely. >>>M. Tye Cozart

OUT:
June 15.
FILE UNDER:
Limp electro-erotic.
R.I.Y.L.:
Lords of Acid, Underworld, newspaper phone sex ads.



KOOL KEITH ☆
Black Elvis/Lost in Space Ruffhouse-Red Ink

Kool Keith boasts his way through the first track of this solo disc, urging an imaginary record label executive to set a "Release Date." The ex-Ultramagnetic MC's and Dr. Octagon lyrical stylist, renowned for his flakiness, suddenly sounds so urgent because he's got something to say. After a decade or so of being known as an innovator and an icon—Prodigy gave props by sampling him on "Smack My Bitch Up"—Kool Keith Thornton wants to claim his place at the forefront of today's hip-hop. He's blunt, criticizing more financially successful

peers with disses about their flashy displays and "fronting on a cellular phone that doesn't work," as he raps on "Intro." But aside from the clever jabs, Keith keeps the focus on his own skills as an MC and as a lover. He's still fascinated with spaced-age themes, as evidenced on the futuristic R&B vamp "Supergalactic Lover" and the minimalist funk jam "I'm Seein' Robots." He's also adept at advertising himself to the ladies, especially on the tongue-twisting soul stomp "Master Of The Game," which features a vocoder salute to Roger Troutman of the '70s group Zapp. Keith may be too talented to become a major success, as much of Puff-d-up mainstream rap doesn't approach the cognitive level he reaches so effortlessly. Still, it's awe-inspiring to hear him plead his case. >>>Richard Martin

OUT:
August 3.
FILE UNDER:
Fantastic Bess.
R.I.Y.L.:
Prince Paul, Digital Underground, Latex and Lyrics Bess.

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LABRADFORD
E Luxo So Kranky

Labradford is the sort of hand you can have on for several minutes before you remember that you have music playing—and I mean that in the best way. The music is ambient in the purest sense: mixed very low, organic and random, yet repetitive to the extent that it becomes more of an unconscious mantra than something you notice in the foreground. Even when it started out, Labradford made a point of being "barely there," but with *E Luxo So*, most of the time, the band is even less there. Labradford's earlier releases were droning, whooshing

surreal swirls, with layers of atonal Moog synths, spaghetti Western guitar twangs, and echoey, dissociated whispers. But *E Luxo So* follows the Richmond, Virginia, trio's previous album, *Me Media Naranja*, away from the older wind-tunnel ethos, toward an even more spacious, stripped-down and yet abstract approach. Gone are the Moog drones and Mark Nelson's vocals, leaving the focus on short tape loops and on repetitive piano lines, over and over, fading into infinity. Nelson's work on his side project Pan American seems to inform *E Luxo So* a hit—dub bass and bossa nova rhythmic clicks lurk beneath the surface; a string section and a dulcimer also add texture. But for the most part, *E Luxo So* shows Labradford taking one step closer toward beautiful, undistilled silence. >>>David Jermam

OUT:
May 24.
FILE UNDER:
Animated abstractions.
R.I.Y.L.:
Quiet Brain Era, Negle Badalamenti, Bark Psychics, The Care's Seventh Season.

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reviews

R.I.Y.L. RECOMMENDED BY YOU LIKE
★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

The London Suede



OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Mixing the weird guidelines.

R.I.Y.L.:

Shoulder to Think, Poly, Razy Music, glammy Bowie, L. Rex.

LONDON SUEDE ★

Head Music

Columbia

On paper the London Suede seems a dubious proposal: five British lads making music in 1999 with a religious fervor for the heyday of glam-rock, complete with all its stances and sounds. In fact, listening to *Head Music*, the band's fourth and most reverential album, it's hard to believe that, with the exception of the odd Smiths single, any member owns an album recorded after Bowie discovered Berlin. But it is just this adherence to orthodoxy that makes the album so enjoyable. At its most basic, glam-rock was about reinvention, a

romantic vision of the individual as extraordinary. After all, it was glam's twin pillars, David Bowie and Marc Bolan, who transformed themselves from suburban boys into guitar-playing gods. Though the London Suede may opt for the stylish sophistication of Razy Music over its forebears' outlandish theatricality, it is their aesthetic, anthemic in sound and dramatic in vision, that shapes *Head Music*. Filled with the period's trademark big drums, staccato guitars, swelling choruses and tales of adolescent love, the album is a throwback and the band knows it. As Brett Anderson sings at one point, "I feel schizo/Ever so psycho/Kicking an old tin can/Singing I can't get enough." And while there may not be anything groundbreaking here, it is certainly hip-shaking.

>>>Adam Silverman



OUT:

July 6.

FILE UNDER:

It's the story, not the song.

R.I.Y.L.:

Of Montreal, Spine Head, Bazil, Indolence, Barichane Family.

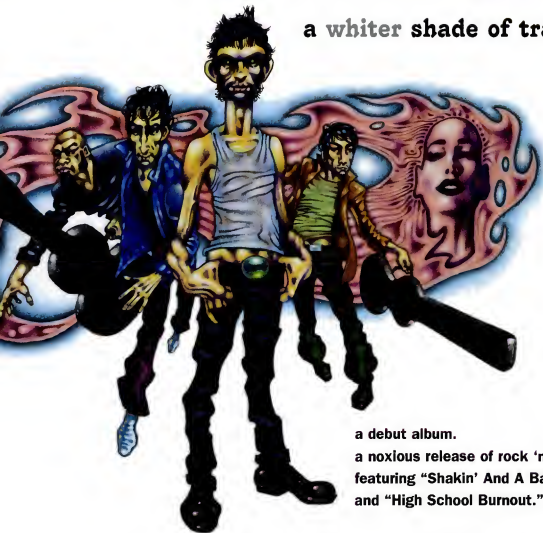
MUSIC TAPES

First Imaginary Symphony For Nomad Merge

Every month of 1999 seems to bring at least one release from the Elephant Six collective of DIY pop imitators, and most of them revel in the joy of music-making. This month features the debut album from the Music Tapes, the project guided by Julian Koster, best known as Neutral Milk Hotel's singing saw, banjo and accordion player. Unlike the rest of the ES collective, the Music Tapes are not about songs or melodies or even sound sculptures: *Imaginary Symphony* is all fragments of tunes, wavering childlike vocals, old-time radio announcements, and goofy sci-fi plot fragments. As revealed in a Koster-inked comic/lyric sheet, the plot involves televisions that inadvertently conquer earth and "an orchestration designed to repel parents"—but we're not talking Marilyn Manson here. "You must relate to the earthing, mortal!" Koster squeaks several times and plucks a banjo; broadcast voices interrupt to announce Superman's death and a "Warning" that one listen at one's own risk. The "Imaginary" designation seems appropriate; nothing here stays in focus for long, so even when "March Of The Father Fist" begins with a percussive sing-along, within seconds the piece devolves into an incoherent mess. Granted, Koster's got quite an imagination, but a *real* Symphony—for Nomad, or whomever—would be more satisfying.

>>>Steve Klings

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LOUIS PHILIPPE ★

A Kiss In The Funhouse *Le Grand Majestic*

Finally one of the unsung heroes of the lounge revival is getting his fair shake. Frenchman Louis Philippe was recording his well-crafted pop gems and pseudo-exotica for the legendary El Label throughout the '80s—almost a whole decade before the birth of the cocktail nation. Philippe's strength is light, summery, well-arranged pop numbers. His recordings are full of the sort of bouncy choruses and jaunty horns that haven't been heard since the days of Esquivel and Enoch Light. As witnessed by this US collection of his work, Philippe's music runs

the gamut from unapologetic breezy AM pop ("Every Day Gone By," "Rafaela") to hip-swiveling bossa nova ("Carioca," "Sunshine")—there's even a few sultry Parisian cabaret numbers ("L'Hiver Te Va Bien," "Le Voyageur") thrown in for good measure. A gifted vocalist, Philippe is equally convincing whispering along to a theremin in the Gilberto-esque "Ainsi Va Sa Vie," as singing a falsetto on the Wilson/Bacharach number "Only A Fool." It is undoubtedly an eclectic mixer, but Philippe's lush arrangements and orchestral production are the glue that holds the record together. While his name or pseudonyms have appeared in connection with many of this past year's more popular loungey albums (Songs for the Jet Set V2, April March, Valerie Lemercier, Momus), Louis Philippe has always seemed the forgotten man. That is, until now. >>>Sam Wick

PLAID

Rest Proof Clockwork *Warp-Nothing*

Warp Records made a home for electronica's jazzboos-at-heart, artists like Plaid, Aphex Twin, and Squarepusher who beat the hushes of the music's history and reexamine its polyrhythms and other multiplicities under a digital microscope. What sets Plaid apart from the rest is its lack of the kind of formal seriousness that gets this stuff pejoratively called things like "cerebral" and "intelligent." Building on last year's *Not For Trees*, *Rest Proof Clockwork* brings melody back into the equation. With a scattling, playful attitude that any Tortoise fan would recognize,

these 15 tracks ask the age-old question: How noodlingly complex can an arrangement get before all tunefulness is lost? On the liberal side is "Ralome," a sort of electronic answer to the lush, embroidered sound of classical acoustic guitar. "Dead Sea" is a more impressionistic piece; with its mix of underwater sounds and pipe organ, it ought to have been the soundtrack to a Jacques Cousteau special. *Clockwork* is eclectic to a fault, full of clever segues between Latin-style guitar and canned club beats, the saw-toothed skitter of jungle and the bouncy synth of '80s pop. This pulling out of stops is fun, but frustrating in the long run. It becomes too easy for Plaid to change instrumental channels rather than create a deep interplay of sounds. And isn't that what ensemble jazz is supposed to be about? >>>Andrea Moad



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reviews

RETURN OF THE GRIEVOUS ANGEL: A TRIBUTE TO GRAM PARSONS

Various Artists

Almo Sounds



OUT:

July 13.

FILE UNDER:

Cosmic American music.

R.I.V.L.:

Emmylou Harris, Wilco, The Horse Whisperer soundtrack.

Gram Parsons's work in the late '60s and early '70s as a solo artist and with the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers asked the hippies and rock 'n' rollers to reckon with Nashville and Memphis, and vice versa; he called it "Cosmic American Music." *Return Of The Grievous Angel*, a tribute overseen in part by Parsons protégé Emmylou Harris, verifies that his style and songwriting continues to influence talented folks like Lucinda Williams, Elvis Costello and Whiskeytown as they work the edges

of country (the set avoids Parsons's soul jones). Most artists here don't need to shift their styles at all to slip into Parsons's soft shoes; many take the opportunity to do a Gram-and-E Emmy-style duet, with Harris herself stepping into her old role to sing with Beck (in a straight repping of "Sin City"), the Pretenders, and Sheryl Crow. As is often the case with tributes, the least reverential versions provide the highest highlights: the Cowboy Junkies make "Ooh Las Vegas" a tale of spooky addiction; the Rolling Creekdippers (Victoria Williams and former Jayhawk Mark Olson, et al.) fulfill the gospel promise of "In My Hour Of Darkness," and, in the set's one burst of rock 'n' roll, Wilco glam-orizes "One Hundred Years From Now." Unsurprisingly, *Return Of The Grievous Angel* affirms Parsons's role as the godfather of alternative country.

>>>Steve Kluge



OUT:

June 22.

FILE UNDER:

Politically charged, irrepressible youth metal.

R.I.V.L.:

Rage Against The Machine, *Downset*, *Long Walk, Red (re)*, *Korn*.

REVEILLE

Laced

Elektra

Reveille is to Rage Against The Machine what Silverchair was to Nirvana, but the blatant aural similarities don't necessarily mean that Reveille should be pigeonholed as a cheap knockoff. The maiden voyage of these rebellious youths—the kids in Reveille (it rhymes with "heavily" and means "signal for awakening") are all between 16 and 19 years old—finds them proudly displaying their influences like a fresh tattoo. The sucker-punching introductory riffs and guttural growls of Reveille's major-label debut *Laced* recalls Rage Against The Machine's angry metal, just as a fuller, closer listen conjures images of Rage's in-your-face lyrical platform. While the market may currently be saturated with rap-metal hybrids, Reveille stands out from the copycat pack simply because its anger is more personal and less PC, which makes it less assaulting and didactic. There are socially conscious lyrics, but with *Laced*, you can separate the sound from the fury. Reveille doesn't preach; it searches its soul. In turn, the Boston boys don't make you feel like you're at a campus political rally. It's the down-tuned riffs of pissed off tunes like "Judah" and "Flesh And Blood" that speak at the highest volume. If you succumb to the pummeling sonic mayhem, you'll be a converted member of the Reveille congregation. Or wishing Rage wouldn't wait three years in between albums.

>>>Amy Sclarretto

RYE COALITION ★

The Lipstick Game **Gern Blandsten**

In recent years, melodic angst has supplanted the terribly vicious growling that once defined classic Midwestern punk. Packing its songs with nods to both dramatic classic rock 'n' roll and stop/start, stungun punk, Rye Coalition evokes the cruel ferocity of Touch And Go's roster circa 1985 (Big Black, Killdozer, etc.). Much like the working man aesthetics of the fly-over people which inspired so many '80s punk bands, Rye Coalition is animated by the nastier realities of its home state, New Jersey: the stank of I-95, the ennui of the suburbs, the

evil schemes of latchkey kids. Dave Leto's bass lines are potent, and he obviously possesses the sensibility of a true brutalist; he is well complimented by his brother Gregg's solid contribution on drums. Guitarist Jon Gonnelli alternates between cutting phrases and juicy rock bits, and vocalist Ralph Cuseglio plays the part of the dissatisfied psychopath in an homage to vocalist/exhibitionist David Yow (the Jesus Lizard). You won't be able to understand much of what Cuseglio says but you're probably none the worse for it, as the few words one can identify—"misery," "the lipstick game," "rock star life," something about "roosters"—indicate that any narratives are best left to the imagination. This is wonderfully ugly punk played by and for ugly people.

>>>Alice Hanley Bemis

SCHNEIDER TM

Moist **Mate**

A linear-loving electronic outfit that thrives atop a musical treadmill, turning up the speed and cruising along all Mantra-like while sounds gather like mud in the wheel-wells, Schneider TM is really one guy, Dirk Dressehaus, his home studio, and sound gathered from around his country home. If you recognize the name, it's perhaps from his jaw-droppingly great remix of the High Llamas on their *Lollo Rosso* EP, or in articles in which he's lumped in with kindred Germans Mouse On Mars and To Rococo Rot as part of the "Teutonic Boom." His synthetic music relies on strange snippets of sound, which he transforms into rhythm and beats, and samples and Casio-tone melodies that he stretches and magnifies to create structure. Rarely do his songs pound or bellow, break down or explode. They just start moving and keep doing so until they decide it's time to bail. And in this context, Moist works, though identifying one song from the next in a blindfold test would prove difficult, because Schneider seems to access a few standard templates throughout. These templates, when magnified and closely examined, do vary, but are relatively monochromatic in construct. It makes great vacuuming music, though.

>>>Randall Roberts



OUT:

June 7

FILE UNDER:

Ugly punk rock that rocks.

R.I.V.L.:

Jesus Lizard, Big Black, double-trio
Led Zeppelin, Birthday Party.



OUT:

July 23

FILE UNDER:

Teutonic electronic.

R.I.V.L.:

Mouse On Mars, To Rococo Rot,
Kraftwerk.

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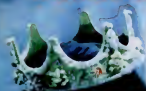
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reviews



SPAIN

SPAIN ★ She Haunts My Dreams

Restless

OUT:

June 23

FILE UNDER:

Late-night lethargy

R.I.Y.L.:

Understitch, Velvet Underground,
Red House Painters, Lene

lyricism. In the first line on *She Haunts My Dreams*, Haden announces, "Made up/My mind/Tonight I'm leaving you," and for most of rest of the album he struggles with the fate of one romance or another. Unfortunately, where *Blue Moods* ruminated on what-could-be with a smoldering whisper, *She Haunts My Dreams* lingers on regret with an almost emotionless reserve. Musically, the album is even more subdued than its predecessor, downplaying its more provocative, jazzy accents (Josh is, not incidentally, the son of jazz great Charlie Haden) for a hypnotic, slow-mo shuffle of acoustic guitar, bass and lightly tapped drums. There's a fine line between evoking a sense of mystery and saying nothing at all. This time out at least, Haden and co. seem to have kept a bit too much to themselves. >>>Colin Hems



Nobukazu Takemura / 2000

NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Scope

Thrill Jockey

OUT:

June 8

FILE UNDER:

Digital technology's underbelly.

R.I.Y.L.:

Diva, Steve Reich, Astor Piazzolla,
CD-R tracking errors.

If you've ever fast-scanned through a compact disc, paying heed to the individualized digital blips and odd arrhythmic emerging from your speakers, you'll immediately recognize the main sonic tic of Japan's Nobukazu Takemura. Especially evident on the record's 22-minute opening track, "On A Balloon," it's a sound he revisits repeatedly while introducing a variety of "wrong" soundings familiar to anyone who has set up a home stereo: grounding mistakes, bad connections between components, short bursts of pulsing, low grade

feedback. While artists such as the German conceptualists in Oval have explored these sounds before, Takemura's approach is more bright eyed: his extensive use of clean, clear chimes—sometimes from a vibraphone, at others from electronic sources—feels like a dip in a pool of melody when heard next to the parched theoretical efforts of his peers. Scope's later tracks hearken back to the tape experiments of the minimalist composers of the 1960s. "Kepler" is packed with cyclic chimes and snippets of angelic human voices similar to those found in Steve Reich's middle works. This disc isn't for everybody—the CD scanning alone is sure to turn off some listeners. But if you're willing to indulge him, Takemura reveals that there are myriad ways to employ the digital age's sonic glitches. >>>Alec Hembly Buzza

THOSE BASTARD SOULS

Debt & Departure **V2**

Now that estranged Gritter and head Bastard Dave Shouse has morphed his bedroom side project into a five-member affair, he's delivered a record that invites adjectives never applied to his former band: polished, studied, lush. What Shouse carries over from the Gritters is a penchant for meandering, insinuating melodies, the kind you hum a day later but can't recall where they're from. Much of *Debt & Departure* nearly encroaches on alt-country terrain, with Shouse's clean strumming supporting a vocal delivery oddly reminiscent of David

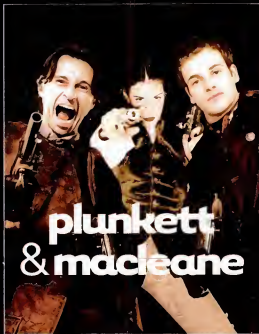
Bowie. Joan Wasser (of the Dambuilders) contributes some expressive violin work, and can reach back for the jarring effect the band occasionally tosses in among the otherwise smooth veneer. Four songs reappear from the Souls' 1996 debut disc—these are the more rollicking, straightforward rock numbers, and aren't much altered aside from a more fleshed-out band sound (a track from the last Gritters LP is also reprised). More impressive is the startlingly melancholic new material, which is imbued with a sense of loss seemingly informed by the 1998 death of Jeff Buckley (a good friend of Shouse's, and Wasser's ex). The mixed sources leave *Debt & Departure* with the feel of a transition album. While I hope Shouse cheers up, his introspective side warrants further exploration. >>>Glen Savady

TIGHT BRO'S FROM WAY BACK WHEN

Runnin' Thru My Bones Kill Rock Stars

Joni Mitchell, of all people, recently said, "Rock 'n' roll is about getting your paycheck and going out on a Saturday night and having a good time." What's more surprising? That an old school '70s folkie said it or that it's true? Tight Bro's (that's "hrose," by the way) make the Saturday night variety of rock. Think AC/DC at a swasty house party or Black Flag if it had become a mustachioed bar band. In the Northwest rock scene, where practically every boy-rocker has some retro shtick involving glitter or cigarettes, the Bro's go for that same-shirt-I've-been-wearing-all-day look. Their punk pedigree is impressive (singer Jared Warren was in the psyche-destroying Karp and guitar twins Jon and Dave hail from the crushing queercore band, Behead The Prophet) and it guarantees they can balance the irony of playing hard rock in the spongy, electronic '90s. As the 12 action-packed songs go whipping by, the locked-down rhythm section always gives the fearless, tricked-out guitars a place to land. Warren stirs us with his best Bon Scott howl and gives each song enough sexy wattage to power every amp in the room. This is the kind of frenzy that cranks the volume on your libido without your tacit consent. Play this loud, but beware! It might destroy your warm relationship with the neighbors. >>>Lois Matfoss

original motion picture score by Craig Armstrong



The second original film score from Craig Armstrong, creator of the award-winning soundtrack to Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo & Juliet*.

For *Plunkett & Macleanne* Craig has composed and conducted 21 pieces of music, ranging in diversity from beautifully haunting atmospheric orchestrations to pulsating beats and strings. Included is a rich and soulful reworking of the Talking Heads' song *Houses in Motion* (featuring guest vocals from Melankolic's Lewis Parker and Helen White [Alpha]).



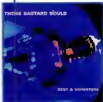
also available on
Melankolic by Craig Armstrong,
THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Craig will be returning with
a new solo album in 2000.

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WORLDWIDE TITLE



OUT:

July 13.

FILE UNDER:

Post-emo melancholy.

R.I.V.L.:

Mercury Rev, Wino, Gritters,

Jeff Buckley



OUT:

April 21.

FILE UNDER:

Death rock for smart people.

R.I.V.L.:

AC/DC, Murder City Devils, Aap.

KOOL KEITH

BLACK ELVIS / LOST IN SPACE

COMING IN AUGUST

COLUMBIA

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reviews



ALI FARKA TOURE

Niafunke

Hannibal-Ryhodisc

OUT:

June 22.

FILE UNDER:

African blues.

R.I.V.L.:

By Mahla, Robert Johnson, Ernest Ranglin, Wim Youngblood Hart.

collaboration with Ry Cooder, the Grammy-winning Talking Timbuktu, mated Toure's guitar rags and multi-lingual vocals to the mystical lightness of Cooder's smooth guitar work. For the last five years, however, Toure's touring and recording career has taken a back seat to his role as a farmer and as the provider for his 11 children in central Mali. Recorded with a mobile studio and generator transported to Toure's village, Niafunke, this record is a darker, busier, and less new age sounding affair than Timbuktu. The connections to American blues are less explicit and the performances seem livelier, captured in the heat of the moment. Shimmering, tightly wound guitar patterns iterate and overlap, multi-layered hand drums chug along, and a droning chorus gives the songs an air of ritual.

>>>Alec Haimley Bemis



TWO LONE SWORDSMEN

Stay Down

Warp-Matador

OUT:

June 22.

FILE UNDER:

Underwater electronica.

R.I.V.L.:

Turbo, House On Mars, In Racoon Rel.

Listening to ambient music is like gazing upon a Jackson Pollock painting. The effect is magnificent but the question lingers, "How did he know when it was finished?" Remixologists Keith Tenniswood and Andrew Weatherall have flipped the decks sideways for Beth Orton, Red Snapper and Primal Scream, but here on their US debut they have sculpted a suite of songs that locks into perfect form with short, sexy bursts of electronica. With bloopy percussion that sounds straight out of the air filter in a fish tank and skittering beats that recall rain skipping off a metal roof, this is music with a water element. Opener "Hope We Never Surface" announces the undersea theme with a submarine's sounding call (and its title also suggests surface noise on an LP, which is telling). The gorgeous "Ty And Lead" presents a savvy spy theme made melancholy by a violin moaning in counterpoint. The squidgy, wet beats of "Mr. Paris's Monsters" suggest what the inside of your mouth might sound like during a teeth cleaning. This stateside issue of Stay Down is fleshed out by the tracks from the EP *A Bag Of Blue Sparks*, but the addition of five of 2L's harder electro tracks threatens to smother the album's simple majesty. Its blissful sway, peaceful currents and underwater imagery could point to a new genre. Dare we call it aquatica?

>>>Lois Maffeo



TOWNES VAN ZANDT

A Far Cry From Dead *Arista Austin*

In 1989, while he was still very much alive, the Tomato label released a compilation facetiously titled *The Late Great Townes Van Zandt*. Two years after his actual death, another collection of the Texas songwriter's finest work surfaces under the less successfully sardonic name *A Far Cry From Dead*. Townes's wife Jeanene and the couple's friend Eric Paul had the best intentions in enlisting a bunch of musicians to flesh out some demo tapes that Van Zandt left behind, but the result is terribly uncharacteristic.

A talented guitarist whose unpolished voice lent a realism to dustbowl narratives like "Pancho & Lefty" (which Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard made a #1 hit) and "To Live's To Fly," Van Zandt spent the '70s amassing a stellar repertoire; nearly drank himself into oblivion in the '80s; and in his final decade split his time between the bottle, the stage and a modest recording studio where he revisited his past tunes. He sounds weary and perhaps wise, his guitar playing steady, but a backdrop of perfunctory drums, keyboards and sundry instrumentation wraps the songs in a sheen that Van Zandt never attained on his own. And why would he? The original takes on "Rex's Blues" and "Pancho" dripped with raw honesty. That was the beauty of Townes Van Zandt—never far from death, but knowing he couldn't outrun it forever.

>>>Richard Martin

OUT:

June 29.

FILE UNDER:

Beats reification.

R.I.V.L.:

Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle,
Suzanne Dole Gibson.



PAINTIN' THE TOWN BROWN
WAS A LIFE

OUT:

June 22.

FILE UNDER:

Live at Bosphorus.

R.I.V.L.:

The singular pleasures of Ween.

of the selections on *Brown* were recorded in Holland—wink, wink), no matter how many phasers and flange pedals they deploy, the songs still persist. *Brown* surveys just about every experiment in genre-mutilation that Ween has attempted; from the balls-to-the-wall boogie abuse of "Dr. Rock," to the Vangelismets-Ronnie Van Zant inanity of "Japanese Cowboy," to the patience-mocking half hour-long renditions of "Poop Ship Destroyer" and "Vallejo." That these experiments fail as often as they succeed is a testament to the luxuries of the studio, but then, Ween has never shied away from self-deprecation. These guys know that the best humor is achieved at someone's expense, and on *Brown* they offer up their own musical oeuvre at the altar of the Big Gulfiaw.

>>>Matt Banks

WEEN ★

Paintin' The Town Brown *Elektra*

Despite every attempt to convince us otherwise, Mickey Melchiondo and Aaron Freeman—Dean & Gene Ween, if you're nasty—have written some downright classic songs in their 15-year partnership. But the fact that they treat their talent more like a burden than a gift is the key to their appeal. On *Paintin' The Town Brown*, a double CD anthology of the live Ween experience, Deamer and Gener sound dead set on returning that gift to the mall and exchanging it for store credit at Spencer's Gifts. Yet no matter how much pot they smoke (many

schneider tm moist

"Moist evokes the beguiling spells of Aphex Twin's best work but never opts for dentist-drill shock tactics." - NME



SCHNEIDER TM's *Moist*, a title chosen for its sound rather than its meaning, floats off at magical tangents from nine various starting points, the only linking factor being the obsession with alien noises.

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LIMP BIZKIT (continued from page 41)

Then there are the *lag*-bashing charges. On "All In The Family," found on Korn's *Follow The Leader* album, Fred and Korn singer Jonathan Davis taunt one another like two teenage football rivals who seem a little nervous showering together. Speaking as a seasoned homo, it's not language that thrills me, but I've heard rap and hardcore tracks that were far more distressing. And any song that ends with a couple of straight white men passionately serenading each other with the lyrics, "And I love you/And I want you/And I'll suck you/And I'll fuck you," can't be all bad.

"There were people that fucked with me, and were always hunting me down, wanting to beat the shit out of me. I'd like to know what those people are doing, and if they got my record."

And quite frankly, if the dude sharing his postprandial banana split (and no, that's not a euphemism) with me truly despises gays, he's doing an impressive job of concealing those feelings. Fred insists that folks would see he's not mean-spirited. "If they knew who surrounds me, and who my friends are. More than half of my friends are gay, and we call each other 'lag' constantly."

"I'm not nice all the time," he concedes. "But I never do anything to hurt anybody on purpose. My songs are my retaliation to hurt my ex-girlfriend and all the people I thought were my friends that have betrayed me. But that's that. I don't want to hurt anyone physically, I don't intentionally say things to hurt people, and I don't make fun of people. Because I know it comes back around."

There's nothing in the dictionary that says art is exemplary because it's rarefied, exquisitely crafted to speak to a highly select audience. Many of this century's finest artists—Irving Berlin, Frank Sinatra, Keith Haring—wanted to reach the widest audiences possible. Knuckleheads need art, too.

Art doesn't begin and end with the act of creation. The exciting part begins when a song or painting or hook enters the public sphere, and takes on new life with each individual's perception of it. Fred Durst dwells on this idea a lot. "What are you going to write about?" he asks himself constantly. "Is this song saying something that most everybody is going to feel, that they'll comprehend and get? Is it a feeling that's common in 90 percent of all human beings?" If the answer comes back "yes," he'll write about it.

"I don't go on these eclectic whims, and heat around the bush with terminology that people won't get. I swing it a couple different ways on the new record, but I'm talking about common things. It's straightforward. Matchbox 20's songs are huge, but when you sing about 'It's three a.m. and I'm in a coffee shop...' how many people are really going to get that?"

"These are my feelings, but I also want to inspire everybody else, so I step outside myself. Should I be freestyle rapping, just because I can rhyme? Should I just brag and boast, and talk about street life? No. A small percentage of people huying my record might be down with that, but that's not going to touch anybody. It's not going to affect them for life."

"I understand what timelessness music, music that lasts forever, is. That's something Led Zeppelin tapped into. Elton John, the Doors. Jane's Addiction and the Cure and Nine Inch Nails made timeless music. Limp Bizkit hasn't gotten there yet, but we're a hell of a lot closer." **MM**

Upon first listen to the languid, luxurious downbeat musicianship of **THIEVERY CORPORATION** (Eric Hilton and Rob Garza), you might liken the duo to European talents such as Vienna's Kruder & Dorfmeister, Paris's DJ Cam, or Bristol's Smith & Mighty. And you'd be forgiven for assuming that the pair hails from the other side of the Atlantic, especially considering that European audiences were the first to embrace this DJ duo's eclectic downbeat fusion of trip-hop, dub, bossa nova, hip-hop and acid-jazz.

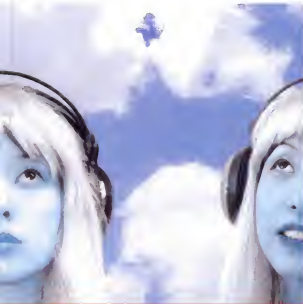


But Thievery Corporation is, in fact, from no farther away than the other side of the Potomac. Hailing from Washington, DC, the duo draws on America's "melting pot" ethos to the fullest extent, creating a cross-pollination of culture and style that is duly noted on the pair's recent mix CD—yet another installment in the accomplished **DJ Kicks** (Studio K7) series. Incorporating hand-picked gems from like-minded artists, including

DJ Cam, Jazzanova, and Up, Bustle & Out, as well as a few of their own cuts and remixes, Thievery Corporation's hour-long turntable expression embraces music not easily pigeonholed by the usual genre tags, which makes the collection vibrant and intriguing, despite its calm, cool and collected pace. Smooth as a Lexus and slick as an Armani suit, this 18-track offering is mood-enhancing, mind-altering sonic therapy that works out the kinks of pre-millennium tension like

caring bands massaging tired, fatigued muscles. A track-by-track lesson in multi-dimensional style and ambiance... For those who enjoy a rougher and tougher ride, look no further than Queens, New York's **OMAR SANTANA**. This

hardcore DJ/producer has walked on the wild side since he first touched the decks in the early-'80s. But things got really hectic in the early '90s when, dissatisfied with the wimpy state of trip-hop, Santana formed H2OH Recordings and, later, Tricked Out Recordings—labels specializing in apocalyptic, unlubricated big beat created from severe techno frequencies, bone-rattling bass lines and hyperactive drum breaks that made the Chemical Brothers sound like the Smothers Brothers. Keeping the hard edge of the underground alive, Santata pummels all comers with his latest attack, **Battle For Planet Of The Breaks** (Moonshine), a bombshell of nu-school breaks, a style of funky breakbeat marked by the utilization of challenging rhythmic structures and howling bass lines akin to drum 'n' bass. The attack is intended for purely physical abuse, and novices may be turned off by the music's atonal, rhythm-driven brutality. But diehards will happily submit to the unrelenting force of artists such as Electroliners, Mild Mannered Janitors, and Santana himself, who performs both on the decks and behind the recording aliases Tales From The Hardside, Wizard Of Oh, and Hard Hop Heathen. **NMM**



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the scene is now



CAN: L. R. LIEBEZEIT, CZUKAY, SCHMIDT, KAROLI

by DOUGLAS WOLK

BANG ON A CAN

The reverberating influence of Krautrock pioneer **CAN**

Few bands are as frequently name-dropped and as infrequently heard as Can. The German quartet of bassist/editor Holger Czukay, drummer Jaki Liebeckzeit, guitarist Michael Karoli and keyboardist Irmín Schmidt initially existed from 1969 to 1978, augmented for a while by singers from America (Malcolm Mooney) and Japan (Damo Suzuki). Around the time Can broke up, it started to become hugely influential on the post-punk generations of bands that were looking for a way to combine the depth and complexity of avant-garde with the pulse of rock. But Can has remained something of a musicians' secret: it never had a hit song in Anglophone countries, a lot of its albums are spotty (neophytes are directed to the group's early-'70s' peak, *Tago Mago* and *Ege Bamyasi*), and most of them have been available intermittently at best. That may be about to change. Virtually all of Can's individual and collective catalogue is finally in print in America (through Mute), the band has just released a retrospective boxed set, and several members are working on high-profile new projects.

Can's most important idea was that a pop song could be "written" in the course of collective improvisation. Most of the band's material started as extended jams taped in the studio; later, Czukay would return to the tapes and turn them into something very different and much more structured. "The beginning of editing was: 'You have made

some mistakes,'" he says. "Our first idea was to eliminate the mistakes. Then we found out that the mistakes were the best thing that could happen to us. So suddenly we managed editing in a different way: to make sense, to have a start and to have an end of something." The idea spread to the "Krautrock" movement of German bands of the '70s—Fauz, Neu and others—and then to other artists in subsequent decades. Bands from Tackhead to Mogwai to Jessamine to Stereolab have played first and then reworked their playing into compositions. The Fall, which used to do it a lot, wrote a song called "I Am Damo Suzuki." Sonic Youth has lately been making a lot of use of the technique; Thurston Moore wrote that Can "were our clarion call, our initiation to our future," and Lee Ronaldo and Steve Shelley took on "Spoon" for 1997's Can remix collection *Sacrilige*.

Beyond its structural innovations, though, Can's fingerprints turn up all over the last 30 years of experimental pop: Liebeckzeit's knotty snare-snap underscoring Brian Eno's punk rejoinder "Backwater" in the '70s, Czukay producing the first Eurythmics album in the '80s, Berlin technoheads Workshop sampling Karoli's guitar whirr from "I Want More" last year. It's hard to imagine the Orb without the woody hills of "Aumgn," or Gas! Del Sol without the way "Soup" adapted the meticulous topwork of composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (who had taught Schmidt and Czukay) to a rock context, or the Boredoms without

IS NOW

the twitching, schizoid mix of "Cutaway." The bands Hunters & Collectors and Moonshake and the record label Paperhouse all named themselves after Can songs; the Mooney Suzuki named itself after Can's singers. The Buzzcocks took a riff from "Bel Air" and called it "Late For The Train." When the Sex Pistols ended, there was some talk of John Lydon becoming Can's singer, but the band had basically ended by then; instead, he formed Public Image Ltd., whose early records' sound owed more than a bit to Can's *Monster Movie* and "Mushroom."

"Can was way ahead of their time," says John King of Beastie Boys/Beck producers the Dust Brothers. "When I heard it, I was surprised it came from the '60s/'70s. It obviously influenced a lot of modern acts." He and his partner Mike Simpson have long had a Can tribute album in the works; www.nickelbag.com/music.html links to clips of Beck's stellar version of "I'm So Green" and the Geraldine Fibbers' take on "Yoo Doo Right."

In fact, Schmidt is willing to take his band's influence a step further: He believes that drum 'n' bass "has its basis, in a way, in Can." That's a heck of a claim, but he backs it up: "It's in the way Jaki played. The rhythm—the drums, basically, but the whole group as a rhythm group—was the center of our music. In form, it was repetitive patterns which were turned around and around to reveal new aspects, but there was always the central rhythm for each piece. That's very near what drum 'n' bass does."

Liebesitz picks up the thread—virtually the only subject on which he's willing to utter more than five words in a row, and he talks for a good five minutes. "I've always drummed, basically, like a sequencer. Once I've set a rhythm, I keep it from beginning to end—it's like not changing the key of a piece. This was not a new idea in non-European

"Our first idea was to eliminate the mistakes. Then we found out that the mistakes were the best thing that could happen to us."

music, but in European music, it was not known. European music is based on bars. You play a bar, and then the next bar follows, and inside it something else can happen. There's no conceit of repeating rhythm. In jazz, there's no constant rhythm either. Jazz is actually a European idea—it's based on bars. You have triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets. You mix it up; whatever you want, you put inside the bar. It's like you go to the zoo—you have this gorilla in a cage, then you have lions, then you have chickens, on the next page you have whatever you want."

He wanders somewhat further afield before Schmidt leaps in again. "I think the most interesting aspect of what Jaki said, and it leads back to drum 'n' bass again, is that if the drums are the center of the music, it's very hard to have the classical/romantic changing of harmonies above, because the drum's tone is always heard, and sometimes the harmonies simply sound wrong or make the drums sound wrong. That's where Jaki developed this music where the ground tone is the drum, the center of the harmonic. What drum 'n' bass did is to dematerialize the drum tone—to have a drum tone which has no pitch. And on top of this, you can have everything."

For a band that hasn't played together in well over a decade, Can is firmly convinced that this is its moment. To celebrate 30 years of Can, the band has recently released *Can Box (Mute)*, a set including a double CD of live recordings from the '70s, a videotape of a complete gig, and an extensive book of interviews and historical material. Can also returned to the stage—sort of. The four musicians did a short tour of Europe, in which each one appeared with his current solo project, but they didn't play together. "Part of Can's idea was against reproduction," Schmidt explains, "so how could we reproduce Can? It's a disgusting idea to go on stage and do 'Yoo Doo Right' again—this kind of awful, tasteless reunion."



Still, the four did get together in the '80s (with Mooney!) to record the peculiar album *Rite Time*. "That was in the studio," Liebesitz says. "In the studio, anything is possible." They're still collaborating in smaller groups, as well. Damo Suzuki recently came out of semi-retirement and toured with Karoli and Liebesitz in his band; Schmidt will soon be premiering an opera, *Gormenghast*, based on Mervyn Peake's novels, which includes parts played by all four Can

musicians; Czuka's album *Good Morning Story* includes a slew of vintage Can samples.

Still, these solo projects aren't Can, whose essence was that it was a collective with no leader; Czuka says that what made their best work possible was that they were able to "forget about their own will, and start listening." Schmidt even cautions against younger musicians taking his own band's work as an influence. "It would be against any understanding of Can in my sense if there would be any kind of doctrine which we would be able to give. We started at zero and found out our own way, and that's the basic thing." **NMM**



JESSE COLIN YOUNG

"Four in the morning and the water is pouring down/Stove don't work and my baby has just left town."

By 4 a.m. it is impossible to pretend that your life resembles anything seen on TV, except the cop shows. You will not be a functioning cog come 8 a.m., no matter what. But the solitude, the silence and the glistening obsidian of the night sky are as intoxicating as whatever it took to plunge so deeply into that good night.

Some functioning cogs rise that early, feeding farm animals or financial markets, and by that devotion signify their allegiance to an altogether different world. This will not work for them, but those who have not yet visited bed by 4 a.m. will find it all but impossible to lie to the face gazing from the other side of the mirror.

It is a dangerous time to make decisions, for, as Ibsen noted, some truths are best left unexamined. Worth looking for, still.

If Jesse Colin Young had done little more than drift into a studio, sing the opening line to "Four In The Morning," and walk out again, he would be due some kind of immortality. Written by his friend, Robin Remallo, "Four In The Morning" fits comfortably in the woman-killing folk tradition that links the Louvin Brothers' "Knoxville Girl" to Lyle Lovett's "LA County," but cuts closer to the bone.

"Nothing to drink and the sun ain't gonna shine..."

Been there.

(Not the post-homicidal part.)

It's a weary voice, the guitar clearly influenced by the early '80s blues revival, but cleaner, as befit Young's Greenwich Village address.

And, yes, there is much artifice. Young's real name is Perry Miller; he cohled together the stage moniker by combining the names of two gunfighters, which becomes ironic in view of his subsequent pop-hippie success. Artifice, yes, but that song is spot-on perfect, and there may be wisdom in Young's choice not to revisit that bleak place.

His best known song, the Youngbloods' "Get Together," a sunny Summer Of Love pop masterpiece, struck an altogether different mood.

Originally released in 1967, "Get Together" became a top-five hit the summer of 1969; it was Young's only visit to the charts.

Though the fashion of the '60s may, alas, be returning, it inevitably is revived with the context altered. That was my childhood, and its memory is filled with the euphoric hope that I lived on the cusp of a generation engaged in a great battle for the future of the world, and that we (not to mention the world) would win. And so while history remembers the hood and the hatred and the ugly divisions of that time, it is helpful to remember the hope and joy with which we began. And, yes, I once swore to wear nothing but hellbottoms for the rest of my life, and we didn't win.

"Get Together" is still a pop classic, even if we didn't.

Joy, then. Sung in his high, sweet voice (much like that of Jonathan "Sunshine" Edwards), Jesse Colin Young's best songs sing, shimmer, and sway to the quiet infernal flame of joy.

And so, while "Four In The Morning" was his longtime companion, it is far better that I thank my older brother for so often visiting the family hi-fi hearing the Youngbloods' one and only long playing masterpiece, *Elephant Mountain*. (They made and repackaged too many other indifferent records; this is a singular treasure.)

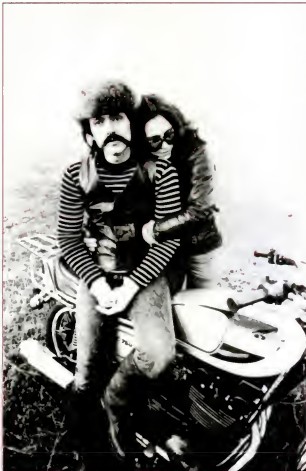
Yes, it begins on familiar ground with "Darkness. Darkness," but even that song's concluding chorus—"emptiness, emptiness, oh, yeah"—has a jaunty wiggle. Besides, "Darkness" is immediately followed by the invocation "Let's all get high" that starts "Snaug" (one wonders if that's the voice of producer Charlie Daniels—yes, that Charlie Daniels), and the frolic begins. "On Sir Francis Drake" is a happy, delightful instrumental, while "Sunlight" is a pop gem and the soaring "Beautiful" is a tender (all right, dated) love song.

Point is, *Elephant Mountain* is a rare friend (along with most of Victoria Williams's catalogue) that can be counted on to lighten the day's burden, though the

wisdom of age has taught me not to seek that 4 a.m. mirror.

Ultimately, Young lifted another burden, for he broke me of the collector's need to own everything. No, like many of the bluesmen who became his early influences, he had comparatively few moments of brilliance. But those few moments are more than is given to the rest of us, and they help me to remain (sorry) forever young.

Grant Alden is co-editor of *No Depression* magazine.



μ-ZIQ

Royal Astronomy

If nothing else, Mike Paradinas has acted as electronic music's chameleon over the past six years, adopting new sounds and guises (Jake Slazenger, Gary Moscheles, Tusken Raiders, etc.) without a hint of contrivance. He certainly can't be accused of bandwagon-jumping because he winds up making records that are always out of place. His newest endeavor is no exception; it is perhaps his most accomplished record to date. After the spiky, anxious textures of his 1997 album *Lunatic Harness*, Paradinas has made a delicate but funky pop album that never tips over into kitsch but refuses to take itself too seriously. Opening with a track that could have been on a Saint Etienne album a couple of years ago, μ-Ziq proceeds to quietly demolish all of his listeners' expectations, by inserting a female vocal chorus over a swamp of analog dissonance which manages to retain a thread of melody. With the flick of a switch, Paradinas can rock the box with the greatest of ease. μ-Ziq never loses track of the fact that experimental electronics aren't always about bespectacled, self-righteous seriousness; they're as much about a good deep head nod as they are about algorithmic precision.



Astralworks

>>> Now that we've fully entered the post-Artificial Intelligence era, it was only a matter of time before the hundreds of US fans of quiet experimental electronic music began to make music of their own. And, like Boards Of Canada, Bolo, Black Dog, Autecore, Aphex Twin, and Plaid, these folks don't always emerge from large metropolitan centers. "Pastoral techno" is a term that could describe the evocative tones of Boards Of Canada's music, and it could also be applied to the work of Alex Graham, a 19 year old from Orange County, California. Graham has done tracks here and there for small independents in the last year, but nothing could have prepared me for his new EP, *Double Density* (Orange), released under the name LEXANCULPT. (The album is accompanied by a floppy disk containing MP3 files of the songs.) This record establishes Graham at the vanguard of playful, imaginative electronics, as it draws equally from the menacing production of Mobb Deep to the incandescent melodies of Autecore in its *Ti Repetae++* period. The tumbling, latticework percussion is anchored by a deep kick drum which seems to fall just outside of any recognizable time signature. Finally though, Graham's music is reminiscent of early Detroit work like Rhythim Is Rhythim's "Solo Solo" and "In The Beginning" in its refusal to let go of the minor-key chord change, thus retaining a melancholic edge throughout... Taylor Deupree coined the useful term "laptop music" to

describe the sub-minimal electronics being made by artists such as Ryoji Ikeda, Thomas Brinkmann, and other practitioners for whom the term minimalism seems inaccurate. The artist known as end or makesend must be added to that category. His recent *Newtables* EPs were miniature exercises in groove making, like Funkadelic playing in a dollhouse. With his first full-length, the CD-only *Cassette* (Mille Plateaux), and charts a new path into the world where the most delicate tonal or rhythmic change feels like an earthquake amidst an otherwise still life terrain. The tracks are all untitled; only their lengths are provided. What end manages to do, with an immense subtlety, is begin a track with a set of spare, kinetic elements and wring changes on them... I would be remiss if I did not speak here about the D'ARCANGELO's new full-length record made for Grant Wilson-Claridge and Richard James' Rephlex label. The *Shipwreck* LP is nothing less than a towering achievement, a record of such rare beauty that it should not be ignored. These two Roman artists have recorded music elsewhere but this represents the apex of their recording career. There won't be a dry eye in the house after playing two minutes of the opening "Tunemx II"; an exquisitely melodic piece undergirded by impossibly heavy kick drums. D'Arcangelo also move into the realm of '80s synth-pop and manage to make even that sound warm but pristine.

dance top 25

- 1 UNDERWORLD
Boatload Fish *100* 12
- 2 APEX TWIN
"Windowlicker" (CDS) *Way-See*
- 3 THEIVERY CORPORATION
Abductions And Reconstructions
Eighteenth Street Lounge
- 4 BADMARSH & SHRI
Dancing Drums *Delicate-Tenney Bay*
- 5 PAUL OAKENFOLD
Global Underground: New York *Boast-Tribe*
- 6 ADD N TO (X)
Avant Hard *Melo*
- 7 SASHA AND JOHN DIGWEED
Northern Exposure III: Expeditions
iRCredible-Ultra
- 8 KMFDM
Adios *Was Trai-TIT*
- 9 ATARI TEENAGE RIOT
60 Second Wipeout *DIR/Delta-EE*
- 10 ART OF NOISE
The Seduction Of Claude Debussy *Revised*
- 11 WE
Square Root Of Negative One *Asphodel*
- 12 FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY
Implode *Metropolis*
- 13 DJ RAP
Learning Curve *Higher Ground/Columbia-CBS*
- 14 VARIOUS ARTISTS
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- 15 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Nephthys—San Francisco Plasmastuff Vol. 1
Nephthys-En
- 16 DA DAMN PHREAK NOIZE PHUNK
Electric Crate Digger *Stain's 17*
- 17 FREESTYLERS
We Rock Hard *Fredauer's-Rammoth*
- 18 DIVERGE
Existence/Program Remixes *BSRP*
- 19 BADAWI
The Heretic Of Ether *Asphodel*
- 20 MOBY
"Honey" and "Run On" (EP) *12*
- 21 HERBALISER
Very Mercenary *Rejoice (Canada)*
- 22 AK1200
Lock And Roll *Revolutions*
- 23 HATE DEPT.
Technical Difficulties *Revised*
- 24 PLAID
Peel Sessions *Nothing-Intrigue*
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Dr. Speedlove Presents Chemical Warfare...
Invisible

Coupled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reports.

You may remember Kid Koala from *Scratchcratchcratch*, his hunch-dug-out display of turntablist skills. Turns out the Kid is also in a



full-on band, **BULLFROG**, and its self-released debut 7" "Bullfrog Theme" (Bullfrog) is as you'd guess. The A-side is a hubby, wobbly little piece of instrumental funk with turntables subtly integrated, mostly for texture, but the flip is where he really shines. "Isn't So Bad" would be an average hit of pop-soul, except that Koala had singer/guitarist Mark Robertson's vocals cut on a dub-plate, and scratches them onto the band's live performance, so they link out and swoop back every few seconds—an entirely new use of an old hip-hop technique. On an untitled extra track, he rides the band's slow, cool groove with a string of berserk movie-dialogue scratches.

The Finnish duo **PAN SONIC'S** recent album *A* was about as abstract as electronica gets—it had lots of thick, creepy sine-wave play, but not much of the boat-work that characterized their earlier releases. The group has followed it up with a 12" EP called, naturally, *B (Mute)*, which is where the beats seem to have relocated themselves. Slow down tracks like "Latans," and the individual percussive blows would probably resolve into distinct patterns of their own; as it is, they're made from clusters of spec-sized events, like metal shavings that coalesce into bullets. It's the sound of goose-stepping robots whose positronic brains have shorted out into killing machines.

For those who prefer their electronica neater and more orderly, **RYOJI IKEDA'S** entry in Noton's "20 To 2000" series of 20-minute minimalist EPs is as clean as they come: 98 12-second pieces (and one 24-second piece) made entirely from the 440Hz A tone—the note string musicians use to tune their instruments—arranged into 99 different regular configurations of rhythm, duration, and stereo panning. If it doesn't drive you bats instantly, it can be very hazing. On the other hand, if you prefer a beatless murk, go straight to **HOOD'S** *The Remixes 12" EP (Drop Beat)*. How murky? Well, for one thing, it doesn't mention what Hood piece these are remixes of. For another, the speed is listed on the label as "3345 RPM," and listening doesn't much clarify it. But the mixers—Third Eye Foundation, Horse Opera, Spymyan and Twisted Science—are all first-rate, and they all isolate tiny hits of what was once a song with a singer (and apparently a

JUD JUD

The Demos

No Idea

In some dark antechamber of music hell, there's somebody whose job it is to dream up blitheringly unlikely hybrids. His crowning achievement is Jud Jud, the conceptual offspring of Negative Approach and the Bobs. The nine tracks of Jud Jud's *The Demos 7" EP* are packaged like every other archival straight-edge hardcore record on the planet, including reproductions of the group's old gig posters (surely you caught the Jud Jud/Chain Of Strength/Uniform Choice/No For An Answer bill?) and a lyric sheet with way-obvious notes ("These words represent values, ideals, friendships and motivation. They define who we are"). And the lyrics themselves? Well, here's the beginning of "Rounds Of Jud Song": "Jud jud/jud jud/jud jud/jud jud jah... Tss tsss tsss/Digga digga digga digga/Eeeeeeeeee/Jud jud." The two members of Jud Jud (one in each speaker) have made the first wordless a cappella hardcore record, and they've got every single rhythmic cliché of the straight edge single down perfectly. Most of the lyrics, in fact, are "Jud," though we get some other memorable ones scattered through the disc: "jeannought," "wah nah," noises simply indicated as "dive bomb," and (inevitably, on "Backmasking Song"), "duj duj duj." And they, ahem, tune halfway through the second side. It's the most brutal slam imaginable at the cookie-cutter aspects of hardcore, or maybe the most loving homage.



cellist), clone, mutate and expand them, and mold them into landscapes as alien as your own magnified skin.

Back in the world of pop songs—remember those?—the **ESSEX GREEN**, an ad hoc spin-off of the Ladybug Transistor, has made a lovely little debut 7" EP, *The Sixth Great Lake (Sudden Shame)*. It's in the mildly psychedelic vein of the Ladybugs, but even more laid-back and tripped-out. The opening "March To The Green" is little more than a set of harmonized hum-hum-hums. When they finally break out the drums, on a gentle, croaky number called "The Crow," it's for a shuffle that recalls the Kinks' more pastoral work. Then they promptly ditch them again in favor of old-fashioned Farfisa and flute, for a song that includes the rhyme "She hopes that he will stay/On the coast of Monterey" and drifts into a had-trip tape cut-up.

A few quick drops of the needle: the **HANDSOME FAMILY**, husband-and-wife duo Rennie and Brett Sparks's grim, modernist country project, has an unsettling little tune called "My Beautiful Bride" on a split single with **SACKVILLE (Mag Wheel)**. It's essentially a murder ballad, though it's not quite explicit about it, and Brett intones it with a clear, booming

Grand Ole Opry voice, which makes it even more disturbing... **ELECTRONIC** has just released "Vivid," its first single in a few years (Parlophone UK). It's nice to hear

Bernard Sumner's voice and Johnny Marr's harmonica again, though the song itself is nothing that special. Go for the second CD, though: It's got a whumping, disjointed remix of another tune, "Prodigal Son," done by Inch, the producers formerly known as D.O.S.E., and "Radiation," an extended collaboration with former New Order producer Arthur Baker that suggests how Sumner's old band might have gone in a more rock direction... And the extended meditation award of the month goes to **MADONNA**, whose "Nothing Really Matters" single (Maverick) has almost 68 minutes' worth of remixes, including a Kruder & Dorfmeister version that turns a few notes and fewer words into a ten-minute mantra, and Talvin Singh's "Vikram Remix," which dresses up the drone at the song's harmonic core as a sitar-ish buzz and sprinkles it with tabla percussion.



ISLEY BROTHERS

It's Your Thing: The Story Of The Isley Brothers (box set)

Sony Legacy

The Isley Brothers were one soulful family. For most recording artists, having just one mega-hit, such as the Isleys' 1963 song "Shout," would be enough to ensure immortality, but for the Isley Brothers, that represented only the start of a long and illustrious career. Not content to become another oldies act doing its one hit on the touring circuit, the

group continued to expand and evolve throughout the decades, and its greatest creative peak came during the years 1968-74, amply represented on this three-CD box set. Virtually overnight in 1968, young Ernie Isley morphed into a besuicated guitar hero a la Jimi Hendrix, while the group's lyrics rode the simultaneous waves of black power and hippie countercultural consciousness. Strategic covers of rock and pop tunes (such as Jimi Hendrix's anti-war-themed "Machine Gun") and a burgeoning crop of originals made for a truly winning combination. Significantly, the Isleys could take trendy '70s lite-pop tunes (by James Taylor, Seals & Crofts, and the like) and turn them into sublime soul music moments. Oftentimes, so-called "album tracks" buried deep in the group's LPs were just as strong as other people's hit singles. And the hits kept coming, culminating with the fabulous "That Lady" in 1973, which is perhaps the most blissful five and a half minutes ever captured on recording tape. (It's been popping up lately on TV in make-up commercials and in the form of loops and samples on scores of hip-hop records: "Lady" is famous wailing guitar tag even cropped up on the Beastie Boys' opus *Paul's Boutique*.) Now the Isleys have gotten their due, and it's their time to shine. This is a perfect box set for long, warm summer days.

>>> Men are from Mars, women are from Venus, and venerated space-jazz maven SUN RA was definitely from Saturn. Total Energy, a subsidiary label of Bomp!, has just released *Outer Space Employment Agency*, a phenomenal document of the SUN RA ARKESTRA's other-worldly gig at the Detroit/Ann Arbor Jazz Festival in 1972. This is one of the most mind-blowing of all Arkestra lineups, at one of the most fertile periods in the psychedelic jazz bandleader's long and faded history. Briefly, Sun Ra's turn-of-the-'70s hypothesis was this: Given by the unemployment lines and welfare rolls of inner city America, his employment agenda would put the idle hands of the minority masses to work... on the space program, building a massive space station to launch the first colony into earth orbit. Like a lot of Sun Ra's philosophies, it worked on many levels. The concept was certainly a brilliant

hit of psychedelic space-jazz whimsy, but it was also a subtle dig at the white male hierarchy of astronauts and the early era of the NASA space program.

>>> Not only was BIG JOE WILLIAMS one of the legendary Chicago bluesmen (among other stellar achievements on his resume, Big Joe wrote the classic blues chestnut "Baby, Please Don't Go"), but he was also a prodigious scouter of talent. In the late '60s, Big Joe went back to his original hometown of

Crawford, Mississippi, and recorded some of the unknown local talent there, namely his friends, relatives and neighbors. Strangely enough for a record made by artists that no one had ever heard of, and who had no apparent marquee value, many-

grabbing lawyers intervened and kept the project on the shelf for some 20-odd years. Now it's been released, and Arhoolie's new *Going Back To Crawford* is a real down-home gem of a blues record, the kind of warm, intimate, homespun blues that fans of "the real deal" can appreciate.

>>> It's important to remember that the music we call "electronica" didn't just start in the early '90s. Besides early trailblazers like



Kraftwerk and Silver Apples, many of the current genre's biggest names actually got their start way before their music came to be summarized by a huzzword. One such group was 808 STATE. Rephlex, the label co-run by Aphex Twin, has reissued that group's pioneering album *Newbuild*, originally released in 1988, when the group included Gerald Simpson, a.k.a. A Guy Called Gerald. Ten years ago, this record was certainly ahead of its time, forecasting the direction that this music was going to take. And it still sounds vital today.

>>> Like looking at high school yearbook photos of famous people, it can be entertaining to listen to the music artists made before they became famous. Before Cheap Trick there was Fuse; before Led Zeppelin and the Yardbirds, Jimmy Page was a session guitarist on a host of embarrassing teenybopper records in the 1960s. In the group photos of late '60s band THE CITY, there's one familiar-looking face amongst the crowd: none other than ace songwriter Carole King. Sony Legacy has just released the band's lone 1968 album, *Now That Everything's Been Said*. It's a neat slice of the '60s, a sleeper of an album that doesn't bowl you right over at first, but finds its way under your skin after a while.

>>> Also out from Sony Legacy are new expanded editions of a pair of killer albums by reggae legend PETER TOSH. Along with Bob Marley and Bunny Livingston, Tosh was one of the original Wailers, the crucial group that trailblazed the path for reggae music's rise as an international phenomenon. Tosh broke from Marley and the Wailers in 1973, and his mid-'70s albums *Legalize It* and *Equal Rights* stand out as classics of the reggae genre, before commercialization took its toll. Reggae later lost a lot of its luster, but in 1976, there were few performers as galvanizing and inspiring as Tosh.



- 1 TOM WAITS
- 2 UNDERWORLD
- 3 BLUR
- 4 BEN FOLDS FIVE
- 5 PROLAPSE
- 6 OLD 97'S
- 7 FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE
- 8 BETH ORTON
- 9 PIZZICATO FIVE
- 10 GUS GUS
- 11 MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?
- 12 ADD N TD (X)
- 13 ATARI TEENAGE RIOT
- 14 BECK
- 15 DIDD
- 16 JDAN OF ARC
- 17 MOGWAI
- 18 KULA SHAKER
- 19 WILCO
- 20 FUGAZI
- 21 DLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL
- 22 FANTASTIC PLASTIC MACHINE
- 23 SLEATER-KINNEY
- 24 LOW
- 25 CRANBERRIES
- 26 RENTALS
- 27 RAINIER MARIA
- 28 KMFDM
- 29 FREESTYLERS
- 30 GO-BETWEENS
- 31 LOOPER
- 32 UGLY DUCKLING
- 33 TRANS AM
- 34 CHEVELLE
- 35 BOUNCING SOULS
- 36 DRESSY BESSY
- 37 THEIVERY CORPORATION
- 38 ART OF NOISE
- 39 GENTLE WAVES
- 40 DDT
- 41 VARIOUS ARTISTS
- 42 RYE COALITION
- 43 JUND
- 44 PAPA VEGAS
- 45 MOCKET
- 46 PLAID
- 47 BEULAH
- 48 EUPHONIE
- 49 HATE DEPT.
- 50 FRANK BLACK & THE CATHOLICS
- 51 LILYS
- 52 GHDS
- 53 DJ RAP
- 54 FUZZY
- 55 CAKE LIKE
- 56 FUTURE PILOT AKA CRABS
- 57 BUILT TO SPILL
- 58 APHEX TWIN
- 59 MAKE-UP
- 60 DRDPKICK MURPHYS
- 61 DWSLEY
- 62 PEDRO THE LION
- 64 NIGHTMARES DN WAX
- 65 VARIOUS ARTISTS
- 66 BEN LEE
- 67 MIKE NESS
- 68 MUSTARD PLUG
- 69 BUCK-O-NINE
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- 71 WE
- 72 VARIOUS ARTISTS
- 73 ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO
- 74 CDREY HARRIS
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The Unauthorized Biography Of Reinhold Messner
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Fight Songs
Utopia Parkway
Central Reservation
Playboy & Playgirl
This Is Normal
EVMC: Operational Inter And Reference Guide...
Avant Hard
60 Second Wipeout
Cold Brains (EP)
No Angel
Live In Chicago, 1999
Come On Die Young
Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts
Summer Teeth
Instrument
Black Folage: Animation Music Volume 1
Luxury
The Hot Rock
Secret Name
Bury The Hatchet
Seven More Minutes
Look Now Look Again
Adios
We Rock Hard
78 Tii 79 The Lost Album
Up A Tree
Fresh Mode
Futureworld
Paint #1
Hopeless Romantic
Pink Hearts Yellow Moons
Abductions And Reconstructions
The Seduction Of Claude Debussy
The Green Fields Of Foreverland
Urban Observer
Where Is My Mind? — A Tribute To The Police
The Lipstick Game
This Is The Way It Goes And Goes...
Hello Vertigo
Pro Forma
Peel Sessions
When Your Heartstrings Break
The Calendar Of Unlucky Days
Technical Difficulties
Pistolero
The 3-Way
Tune In, Turn On, Free Tibet
Learning Curve
Hurray For Everything
Goodbye, So What
Future Pilot AKA Vs A Galaxy Of Sound
Sand And Sea
Keep It Like A Secret
"Windowlicker" (CD5)
I Want Some
The Gang's All Here
Owsley
The Only Reason I Feel Secure (EP)
Carboot Soul
Drinking From Puddles
Breathing Tomatoes
Cheating At Solitaire
Trey For Mojo
Libido
Floraine
Squars Root Of Negative One
Becker Street, Greenwich Village In The 90s
Bourbonelles Blues
Greens From The Garden
The Art Of Navigation
- Anti-Epithaph
V2
Virgin
550-Epic
Jetset
Elektra-EEG
Atlantic
deConstruction-Arista
Matador
4AD-WB
Touch And Go
Mute
DHR/Elektra-EEG
Bong Load/DGC-Interscope
Arista
Jade Tree
Matador
Columbia-CRG
Reprise
Dischord
Flydaddy
Emperor Norton
Kill Rock Stars
Kranky
Island
Maverick-Reprise
Polyvinyl
Wax Trax!-TVT
Freskanova-Mammoth
Jetset
Sub Pop
1500-A&M
Thrill Jockey
Sesant
Epitaph
Kindercore
Eighteenth Street Lounge
Universal
Jeepster-Propser
Elektra-EEG
Glue Factory
Gern Blandsten
Pacifico-DeSoto
RCA
Kill Rock Stars
Nothing-Interscope
Sugar Free
Jade Tree
Restless
spinART
Sire
K
Warner Bros.
Sire
K
Helicat-Epitaph
Giant-WB
Made In Mexico
Matador
Kill Rock Stars
Grand Royal-Capitol
Time Bomb
Hopeless
TVT
Minty Fresh
Asphodel
Astor Place
Bloodshot
Alligator
spinART



#1 TOM WAITS
Mule Variations

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. SONIC YOUTH

EXPERIMENTAL MET SEX, TRASH AND NO STAR (DGC)

2. BEASTIE BOYS

ILL COMMUNICATION (GRAND ROYAL-CAPITOL)

3. LIVE

THROWING COPPER (RADIOACTIVE)

4. HOLE

LIVE THROUGH THIS (DGC)

5. ROLLINS BAND

WEIGHT (DRAGON)

TEN YEARS AGO

1. LOVE AND ROCKETS

LOVE AND ROCKETS (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

2. PIXIES

DOOLITTLE (H&M-ELEKTRA)

3. THE CURE

DISINTERGRATION (ELEKTRA)

4. BOB MOULD

WORKBOOK (VIRAGO)

5. THE CULT

SONIC TEMPLE (SIRE-REPRISE)

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 colleges, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their Top 30 most played releases that week.

COMMERCIAL ALTERNATIVE

It's not your father's Oldsmobile, and Fatboy Slim isn't "plop plop, fizz fizz." What it is, is the latest way for advertisers to get into your head.

story:
LESLIE HARPOLD

American youth spent most of the early '90s openly resisting Corporate America and asserting that advertising techniques could not reach them, flatly refusing the possibility that they could be a target market. The apex of this sentiment was echoed in the backlash to the Subaru campaign that had a preppy spokesmodel uttering the now-infamous phrase: "It's like punk rock, but it's a car." Looking at him, clad in his blue blazer, was like looking at every prep school kid you ever hated—you know, the ones that never really understood what "punk" meant in the first place—and the ad was widely mocked and rejected.

And that was at the mere mention of punk rock. Bands that lent their tunes to advertising were met with disdain and fans were quick to point fingers and call them sell-outs. Until recently, to have your song in an ad

was either a signifier of the end of a career, or the hallmark of surrendering any street cred. Evidently, things have changed. As

with a recent Puma ad featuring Korn's "Freak On A Leash," commercials are beginning to use songs right off the modern rock charts. Even more common is for such songs to turn up in ads before they see the charts at all.

Witness the Lynyrd Skynyrd. As the New York City band's second album, *Free Popcorn (Matador)*, was just arriving on record store shelves, one of its songs, "Time To Get Dumb," had already aired as the soundtrack to the new Nike Camp Flight ad. ("Advertising agency Weiden Kennedy) selected it off the album's advance copy, [so] the commercial came out before the record," says Lyle Hyson, who runs Matador's in-house publishing company, Doormat, and works to find these kinds of opportunities for the musicians on its and Matador's rosters.

Artists are no longer stigmatized and ridiculed for having their music in ads; as commercials begin to be recognized as a legitimate forum through which an unknown artist can be heard—and a good way to make a quick buck—greater numbers of artists are getting on board.

"A lot of artists at Matador still resist the concept of having their songs in ads," Hyson says. "Others have come around, gotten excited

about the idea and asked how they can get in. Artists got a lot of shit in the '80s. Now it's more accepted. Bands' priorities have changed. They now have kids, cars and mortgages, and that changed their outlook on things. And so many bands are doing it that it made it more acceptable for others to follow. Over the years, advertisers have gotten more aggressive in seeking me out."

"Independent labels have become better known in the same way independent film did a few years ago," notes Beth Urdang, a music supervisor with her own company, Agoraphone. "There are more bands trying to work. There are more options on how you can make money. If you're on a medium size label, you can do a commercial, be moderately successful and do okay, have a nice career. It's no longer the imperative to be a rock star or perish."

"Advertising is becoming more an entertainment medium than a selling medium."

(whose "Bittersweet Symphony" wound up in the near-legendary "I can" spots), she is most excited when she's able to match an advertiser with an unknown. "If someone comes to me and wants something with a '60s pop flourish, I try to find something updated," she explains. "Advertisers and filmmakers tend toglom onto one idea and want everything to sound like that. I introduce them to bands that nobody has ever heard of, give advertisers options they didn't know existed, but that can deliver a sound that they're looking for. I introduced Coca-Cola to [the now-defunct Chicago group] the Coctails and they did a spot they were really happy with. But they probably wouldn't have found the Coctails on their own."

Urdang points out that bands often don't use their own material in ads, opting instead to reinterpret an old song. A good recent example of this trend is Gomer's covering of the Beatles' "Getting Better" for a series of high-profile Phillips ads. Rob Kaplan, the music supervisor at Messner, Vetere, Berger, McNamee, Schmetterer, who forged the relationship between Phillips and the young Scottish band, shed some light on the processes that bring artists into the fold.

(continued on page 78)

TRICK

(Fine Line)

If you've watched *Beverly Hills 90210* over the years, you know that Tori Spelling's goody-goody Donna Martin is the show's most annoying character. Of course it doesn't hurt that Tori—after so many Wednesday nights, we've earned the right to call her by her first name—is typically outacted by her hair and breasts. Tori, however, has an appealing movie presence, from her fine turn in 1997's *The House Of Yes* to her yuk-yuk cameo in *Scream 2*. Now—here's a sentence I never thought I'd write—Tori is downright brilliant in *Trick*, a beguiling romantic comedy that puts a fresh spin on one-night stands. Christian Campbell (Neve's brother and alumnus of—coincidence?—Aaron Spelling's *Malibu Shores*) plays a gay playwright aspiring to create Broadway musicals. Shut out of his Manhattan apartment, Campbell spends a frenzied evening hunting for a quiet place to take his new boyfriend. Tori plays Campbell's rather talentless muse who awkwardly belts out scenery-chewing show tunes. Working with intelligent material, Tori and her galloping enthusiasm generate grins whenever she's on screen. And it's nice to hear her swear.

>>>John Elssasser

TWIN FALLS IDAHO

(Sony Pictures Classic)

What a plot: Blake and Francis Falls are conjoined twins who live in a dreary hotel, dine on cotton candy and befriend a beautiful hooker. From that synopsis, you might be expecting the latest David Lynch oddity. Not so. However peculiar *Twin Falls* sounds, you may be surprised to find an unusually sweet, low-key romance at the heart of the story. To celebrate birthday number 25, the brothers call a prostitute named Penny (Michele Hicks, the former model, making her big-screen debut) to their room. Overcoming her initial shock, Penny eventually forms an unusual bond with the impeccably dressed lads who rarely speak above a whisper. As dreary as this sounds, there's plenty of quirky humor, such as when the brothers go to a Halloween costume party dressed as—why not?—conjoined twins. "It's the one night of the year they're normal," Penny says. This oddly intimate exercise is the work of real-life twins Mark and Michael Polish (and, no, they're not conjoined), who play the leads, write and direct. With an eerie formal elegance, the Polish brothers blow the doors off the classic love triangle.

>>>John Elssasser

LIMBO

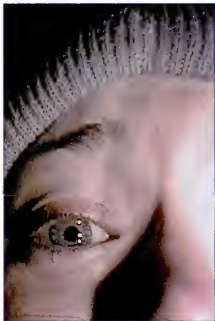
(Screen Gems)

Writer/director/editor John Sayles's first Hollywood lesson must have been "location, location, location." From the volatile Texas border of *Lone Star* to the oppressive bayous of *Passion Fish* and Ireland's lushness in *The Secret Of Roan Inish*, setting and local culture are paramount; in his 12 films it's as if the tale he's weaving couldn't happen elsewhere. *Limbo* took Sayles to Alaska, an isolated locale long viewed as a place to start over. Yet reinventing oneself gets harder with age, involves risk, and is hindered by your past and peers. In this living limbo, a mother and daughter try to mend a broken bond, a couple longs for love, a town tries to recuperate some of its natural resources, and everyone needs to learn forgiveness. Although some of the fringe characters could benefit from more acting lessons, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, David Strathairn, and Kris Kristofferson shine, with Mastrantonio deserving extra kudos for her gorgeous singing voice. Character interactions are intense, the scenery breathtaking, and the song Bruce Springsteen wrote for the film award-worthy. Unfortunately, the film turns into *Deliverance* with glaciers, and an ending that fails to provide closure leaves the audience in limbo.

>>>Carrie Bell

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

(Artisan)



Be afraid. Be very afraid of *The Blair Witch Project*. Even those scare-seekers burnt out by the recent onslaught of teen slasher flicks with genre-mocking plots, tank-top cleavage, and witty pop culture references will be left screaming, rethinking what they did last summer, and wishing they could write off the harrowing tale as an urban legend. The premise: Three student filmmakers hike into a Maryland forest to shoot a documentary about the Blair Witch legend and fail to return. Their 16mm and High-8 footage is found a year later and spliced together to make a film. It documents events in the first person, a technique that effectively limits the viewer's knowledge to that which the camera sees. Genre clichés and gratuitous gore are avoided and the ending is left open to interpretation, which carries the film's impact time till long after the credits have rolled. The unknown status and average-Joe looks of the principal actors (Heather Donahue, Joshua Leonard, and Michael Williams) help maintain the documentary vibe. To achieve believable interaction and an overall sense of progressive deterioration, the directors kept the actors in the dark about a lot of plot points, made them improvise dialogue, and regulated their food supply and contact with the outside world. And to give the film depth and history, the creators have built an entire mythology complete with maps, timelines, outtakes, and faked news stories that can be accessed at www.blairwitch.com.

>>>Carrie Bell

>>> compiled by Jenny Eliscu <<<

MY SON JIMI

By James Allen Hendrix as told to Jas Obrecht
(Experience Hendrix)

James Allen "Al" Hendrix, as you may have guessed, is the father of the fiery psychedelic guitarist, Jimi. And this apparently gives Al the right to reminisce about his own life, which doesn't intersect with his guitar-god son's all that much, for 185 pages. Perhaps diehard Jimi Hendrix followers yearn to augment the biographical knowledge they've obtained from the dozen or more books about the man whose spindly fingers and blues-pop sensibilities rescued '60s rock from becoming the musical equivalent of an overly fluffy marshmallow. But talk about purple haze. Al's recollections, as transcribed by the blues writer Jas Obrecht, read like an 80-year-old's murky walk down memory lane; it's just that this "story" happens to come back around to the nice ol' gentleman's legendary offspring once every few pages. *My Son Jimi* isn't a complete wash. Al's evolution from the youngest child of a lower-middle-class, Depression-era family in Vancouver to a romantic 21-year-old set loose in Seattle, drips with historical value. But the rest of Al's tale alternates between a self-satisfied morality play in which he dubs himself the prince of respectable fathers and a sad homage to a son whose legacy Al tries to control. Unintentionally, this is Al's family scrapbook—one in which his free-spirited and immensely talented son is but a peripheral character. >>>Richard Martin

IN THE GROOVE: VINTAGE RECORD GRAPHICS 1940-1960

By Eric Kohler
(Chronicle)

Album cover designers are too often the unsung members of the recording industry. While their designs can be as integral to the final product as the recording artists and producers, their work is rarely documented and frequently forgotten. There are few books dedicated to the art of album design (*Blue Note, Album Cover Art Of Soundtracks*), but none has ever traced the evolution of the designers as thoroughly as *In The Groove: Vintage Record Graphics 1940-1960*. Spotty record company records made author Eric Kohler's job difficult and it is all the more impressive that, in addition to a beautiful survey of record covers, he has unearthed both the history of the evolution of album art and biographies of the best designers. Starting with Alex Steinweiss's groundbreaking concept of actually designing covers (before Steinweiss all records were packaged in simple generic sleeves) to the cool styles of Blue Note's Miles Reid and the proto-abstract of Saul Bass, *In The Groove* is equally enjoyable as a coffee table book and as an informative survey of an art form whose time for respect has come. >>>Sam Wick

GET A LIFE!

By William Shatner with Chris Kreski
(Pocket Books)

Remember a couple of years ago when William Shatner hosted *Saturday Night Live* and, playing himself in a sketch set at a Star Trek convention, he implored the crowd of Trekkies—in typically hammy Shatner style—to "Get a life, people!" Although this book gets its name from that punch line, it's not as much of a mouth-biting-the-hand-that-feeds-it as you might guess. *Get A Life!* is actually a quite reverent tome about Star Trek fans and what makes them tick. In addition to providing historical insight into the cult of Star Trek fandom, Shatner also answers a handful of "Frequently Asked Convention Questions," provides a list of his favorite James T. Kirk-related websites, and interviews some super fans, Leonard Nimoy and a schizophrenic whose multiple personalities include Spock and Scottie. Best of all, though, is the chapter where Shatner interviews Darryl Frazzetti, a 4'10" Trekkie who—no kidding—dresses his cats up like Star Trek characters. The entire book is nearly worth its weight just for the following Shatnerian quip: About Frazzetti's cat "Bones," Shatner asks, "Did he have a recording saying, 'Demmit, Jim, I'm a cat, not a doctor!'" >>>Jenny Eliscu

ACTUAL AIR

By David Berman

(Open City Books)



Those who know the words of David Berman through his band the Silver Jews won't be surprised that his first book of poetry is a stunner; on Jews records, his lyrics sashay through the songs, wondrously imaginative and wholly unpretentious. You can spot his style a mile away, and the same is true for *Actual Air*. Just read the glimmering first poem, "Snow," in which he deftly transports the reader into a world with white-gray walls of snowflakes that surround a tiny narrative about siblings and snow angels, and you'll be hooked. Throughout *Actual Air* Berman creates miniature settings and situations that he then magnifies—some refreshingly conversational ("New York, New York" begins with the line, "A second New York is being built/A little west of the old one"), others dense and nearly impenetrable (the title "Tableau Through Shattered Monocle" should be taken literally). Berman's poetry imagines history—both American and personal—as "a mulch of white minutes with a few stand-out moments." He plucks these moments, fills them with water until they nearly burst and then places them onto the page with both playfulness and precision. *Actual Air* isn't a lofty, self-important book of verse; it's a collection filled with remarkable strings of words, most of which have never been used in combination before: "Through the lanes came virgins in tennis shoes/Their hair shining like videotape/Singing us into a kind of sleep we hadn't tried yet." >>>Randall Roberts

HIP-HOP'S 'ZINE SCENE



MURDER DOG (164 Robles Dr. #A7-257, Vallejo, CA 94590) is the strangest and most intense hip-hop magazine around at the moment—it's actually been around for years, though it's only recently gotten decent national distribution. It's fanatically, obsessively devoted to the gangsta school, with dozens of ads from mostly local West Coast, Southern and Midwestern labels that are barely distributed outside their localities—looking at the ad pages alone reveals that Pen & Pixel (the people who do the eye-damaging covers for No Limit Records) are busier than anyone could have guessed, and that their aesthetic has vast numbers of imitators. Photoshopping in money, chandeliers and gaudy fonts everywhere they'll fit. As for the actual text, the central feature of the latest issue is an annotated guide to the "218 top debut rap albums of all time"—everybody you can think of, plus the likes of Brotha Lynch Hung's *Season Of Da Siccness* and Kory D.'s *The Blunt Session*. It's also got some interviews that don't even use quotation marks to separate questions and answers (though Detroit's Esham is enticingly weird), and a letters section where one letter starts "I get a hard-on every time I read your magazine." Don't look for much critical perspective—of the 36 albums this issue reviews, none get fewer than three and a half "nutts" out of five—but *Murder Dog* is covering stuff no other glossy magazine goes near.

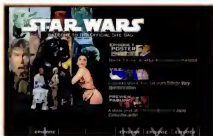
For a much more irreverent attitude, there's **LIFE SUCKS DIE** (PO Box 14801, Minneapolis, MN 55414), which goes a little wider into hip-hop culture—at times, it seems inspired by the earliest, wildest issues of *Grand Royal*. The fourth issue, with its *Cosmo* and *Life* parody covers, is built around a series of collages of graffiti photos, and it's got articles like a guide to British assholes (Liam Gallagher, Louise Woodward, George Michael) and a "Vote For Your Favorite Celebrity Pedophile" contest, as well as one writer's account of the kinds of approaches she got from men when she got a weave and when she ditched it a week later. There are also some hip-hop features that get pretty far afield (they talk to Shortkut of the invisible Scratch Pixls about his old job at Little Caesar's), and an entertaining list of "things you may have slept on" that centers on rap records but also covers Tyra Banks's breasts, Iomega Zip Discs, a bunch of British men's magazines, and a dead rabbi the editors found in the road.

STRESS (89-18 182nd Pl., Hollis, NY 11423) bills itself as "Hip-Hop's Hometown Magazine," and it's pretty much centered on New York—issue #17 includes a long feature on the demise of the porn emporiums of NYC's 42nd St., and it's a little more focused on local clubs and fashion than most of its kin. There's a certain amount of lame and irrelevant content (like the, uh, poetry section, and a pointless piece on the writer's retreat to Hedgebrook), but the reviews are fair, funny and centered mostly on East Coast underground stuff—and they're not afraid to slam the records they don't like. There's also some pleasantly weird stuff, like Kool Keith's guide to what makes women sexy to him ("I may need a woman to dress like Catwoman. You might have to carry a feather or something"). What really makes this issue of *Stress* worthwhile, though, is Abbey Goodman's long, intense feature on the Roots, which digs deep for psychological insight on the group's members, and gets them into some uncomfortable cat-and-mouse games with the interviewer. Goodman clearly loves the Roots' music, and she's fascinated by them, but the piece manages to steer clear of puff-piece profile clichés.

Unfortunately, you can't say as much for **RAP SHEET** (2270 Centinela Ave., Box B-4, Los Angeles, CA 90064). The May 1999 issue starts with an editorial that complains about black-owned companies not advertising with them, and accuses *The Source* of "personal attacks on Rappers who made music that some writers did not like... yet new independent labels can't wait to spend their dollars over there." It goes downhill from there, with one badly written, badly laid out puff piece after another—one on No Limit's kiddie team Lil Soldiers is especially egregious—and a reviews section with some startlingly bad writing. (A review of Rahzel's single starts, "Imagine a group with roots so deep in Hip Hop that they have spawned a member who has literally got a hold on a lyrical shovel and has further dug into the rich earth of this musical genre," and goes on for four paragraphs with only the slightest suggestion that the writer's actually heard the record; it also spells the Roots rapper's name Rhazel throughout, though the headline gets it right.) It bills itself as "The World's First Hip Hop Newspaper," which is admirable, but it's coasting on that rap.

MMH


STARRY EYES



So you've seen *The Phantom Menace* so many times you're going to spontaneously self-combust if you hear the words "I've got a bad feeling about this" one more time, huh? Maybe you're just bummed that there are, ultimately, only four movies to be seen. Well, actually, that's not true—there are a lot more Star Wars movies. It's just that only four of them come from Lucasfilm. Good news: Most of the rest of them are available on the Web in some form or another. Start with the **Mos Eisley Multiplex** (members.aol.com/moseisley/sw-main.html), a huge index of fan-made Star Wars flicks on the web. Some of the best are the simplest, actually: www.fortunecity.com/latocine/lucas/339/page1.html presents scenes from *A New Hope* in "stunning ASCIIation"—made entirely from ASCII characters. And fans of the Stick Figure Death Theater phenomenon documented here a few months ago are directed to "**Death By Lightsaber**" (members.xoom.com/monolith07/sticklightsaber.html), a pretty hysterical take on how a pivotal scene from *Return Of The Jedi* might have turned out with the help of a little mechanical failure. There's an entire sub-genre of movies made with Star Wars action figures as their stars. The funniest of the batch is "**Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars**," by Evan Mather (www.jedinet.com/cinema/QTSwC.MOV), a trailer for what *A New Hope* would have been if it had been a lot closer to *Pulp Fiction*, with plenty of gratuitous violence and lots of disco—including Meeco's version of the "Star Wars Theme." Others use real live actors, like Kevin Rubio's classic **Troops** (www.theforce.net/troops/), of which there are now five episodes. Filmed in the cinematic style of television's *Cops*, complete with *Bad Boys* on the soundtrack, it purports to be a documentary program about the adventures of Imperial Stormtroopers dealing with lawless rebels and Jawas, and it takes on some very familiar incidents from a very different angle ("we've had some reports of some stolen droids, and we think this might be it..."). It's got a counterpart of sorts in **Trooper Clerks** (www.studiocreations.com/trooperclerks/), a remake of the trailer for Kevin Smith's *Clerks* starring the big scary guys in white body armor. Another clever hybridizer has come up with **Star Wars Macbeth** (www.glenridge.org/macbeth/), substituting dialogue from Shakespeare's cursed Scottish play for the considerably less florid language of *A New Hope*. And **Park Wars: The Little Menace** (sabbeth.com/~menace/specialedition.htm) adapts the trailer for *The Phantom Menace* into animation with the *South Park* characters. Seeing the big-eyed, round-faced Yoda eating Cheesy Pools is a unique kind of culture shock.

You don't have to make a movie to make fun of Star Wars, though. **The Official Site Gg** (www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Alley/7028/swosg.htm) includes details on the upcoming Very Special Edition re-re-release of episodes four, five and six—check out the CG bikini babes inserted willy-nilly into the desert scenes to pump it up to an R! One former fan's extensive expression of disgust, the **I Hate Star Wars** page (www.ihatestarwars.com), is a series of rants about the general boneheadedness and pseudoscience of the original movies; the best part of it is fans' indignant responses to its very existence ("You know, Star Wars is better than Christianity!!!! It admits it's fiction and the fans know it!"). The legendary **Star Wars "Pants" List**—a collection of lines from the SW movies that are improved by substituting "pants" for key words—appears all over the place, but the most impressive presentation is at www.powerup.com.au/~jdc/pants.htm. From *A New Hope* ("Jabba doesn't have time for smugglers who drop their pants at the first sign of an Imperial Cruiser") to *The Phantom Menace* ("Once those droids take control of your pants, they will take control of you!"), they're all here. Meanwhile, a couple of students at McGill University have put together "**Oona Goola, Solo?**" (www.greedo.com/~meixner/hardwarewars/), a collection of documents purporting to have uncovered the truth about how the bounty hunter Greedo managed to miss Han Solo, despite firing at him at nearly point-blank range. It's even got brief interview excerpts from the likes of Boba Fett and IG-88.

Finally, though the greatest Star Wars parody ever isn't available online, per se, there's plenty of information about it to be found. Ernie Fosselius's masterpiece **Hardware Wars**, made with plenty of kitchen appliances on visible wires substituting for spaceships, dialogue only slightly dumber than the original ("But Basketball is a peaceful planet! We have no weapons!"), and two giant cinnamon hunks attached to Princess Anne-Droid's hair, has been re-released in the inevitable "special edition," with 20 gratuitous extra scenes (inserted by Fosselius's original collaborator Michael Wiese, without his approval). Shots from the new and old versions can be seen online at www.netrover.com/~meixner/hardwarewars/. As the original and sody dated tag line went: You'll laugh! You'll cry! You'll kiss three bucks goodbye!

MMH

ONES TO WATCH

STYLING: MICHELLE ZACKS PHOTOS: DENNIS KLEIMAN HAIR & MAKEUP: GABRIEL TRUJILLO AND JEFFREY FERNANDEZ



1. NIXON's custom-designed "No. 4" watch (\$85) is shock-resistant and 100-meter water-resistant, and features a night light and date indicator. You can find Nixon's watch-making philosophy engraved on the back of every watch.

2. BABY-G's pink and maroon "G-LIDE" watch (\$99) looks a little retro but keeps it techno with backlight, stopwatch and animated display features.

3. G-SHOCK's "Tough Label" watch (\$120) in royal blue is shock- and water-resistant, and has a daily alarm, auto calendar and a B.P.M. counter. Jump, swim, wake up and dance.

4. Also pictured around Julia's neck at right: The futuristic-looking "camera" shutter mechanism on STORM's stainless steel "Starcan" pocket watch (\$95) is straight out of *A Clockwork Orange*.

5. The little mama version: BABY-G's "Tough Label" watch (\$99) in bright orange is shock- and water-resistant and comes with a backlight, animated display, three melodies and beep alarms.

6. BJ HONDA creates the perfect watch for lils and other nightcrawlers (\$180): a red flashbeacon allows you to read in the dark. The watch case also doubles as a turntable styles case.

7. Click the button on the super-flexible rubberized camo watch by J-AXIS (\$24) and you can tell the time or the date, or watch each digital second pass by.

8. SEIKO's "Kinetic" watch (\$225) with a red silicone watchband is powered by the electricity your body produces when you're wearing it, so you never need to replace the battery.

9. "The Fall Nelson" watch (\$85) by the action sports lovers at NIXON comes complete with an alarm, a countdown timer, a stop watch and pacer functions. Run, young lad, run.

Julia's debut album is called *Figure 8* (Wind-up.) See review, pg. 47, July issue.

New York-via-New Zealand singer/songwriter Julia Darling tries on this season's best timepieces, which include plenty of cool techno features like high-beam lights, eclectic alarms and a B.P.M. counter to help you keep the beat. Clock, umm... rock on.



"We tried to buy rights to the song," he explains. "The Beatles control their master recordings, but not their publishing rights. We were able to get the publishing rights from Michael Jackson, who owns them. So we had a song but no cover. We're trying to market to 20-30 year olds, so we wanted to find a current artist to interpret the song in a way that wouldn't feel phony like the Toyota Everyday People' ad. Talking to Virgin, we thought Gomez could update it and be faithful enough so that people would still recognize [the song]."

The Gomez example is just one among a slew of recent instances where the music in advertising reflects the advertising industry's increased savvy about the younger generation's tastes. But what it also reflects is the maturation of a seed planted in 1991: Not because of its music, but because of its emphasis on cinematic values, the landmark Macintosh "Olympian" commercial—an homage to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey aired during the Superbowl—is credited with having been the first commercial to entertain, rather than just to pitch.

"The biggest change is that advertising is becoming more an entertainment medium than a selling medium," explains Ray Foote, of Big Foote Music, a company that provides music for television, advertising and films. This also reveals why jingles are becoming less and less prevalent. As Foote notes, "Jingles are for selling; using songs doesn't really have the same hard-sell feeling."

"It's strange that techno can be ubiquitous in people's lives and not be charting in the top 40."

But the emphasis on entertainment values is really just in service to the larger goal of convincing normally skeptical buyers to take out their wallets. By getting closer to artists and directors who are in the immediate consciousness of consumers, advertisers have a better chance of getting viewers' attention and entertaining them, rather than annoying them. And because they're being snagged by familiar songs, the viewers are more likely to pay attention and receive the message.

In recent months, the musical lure rearing its head most frequently is techno. While techno hasn't had much large scale success in terms of record sales, electronic sounds are turning up in all kinds of ads, for products with which you'd logically associate the music, like computers and their various accoutrements, in addition to the slightly more abstract, and seemingly most recurring: cars. Referring to his company's use of a Chemical Brothers song, Foote elaborates, "It's a trend [toward using techno in ads] was set, it was [set by] BMW. When you're appealing to a specific demographic, trying to be aggressive, fun and powerful, that slice of the genre is articulated, it really speaks to those emotions. Techno isn't part of the mainstream, but it has been big for a long time in New York and Los Angeles in the halls of those who are producing the commercials, influencing the advertising creators. Advertising feeds off fashion and picks up on trends."

Simon Reynolds, author of the rave culture tome *Generation Ecstasy*, has his own ideas about why electronic music is so widely used in ads, despite its unproven potential for profitability. "It's the visual element," he asserts. "Commercials are a ploy. You're allowed to use cutting edge film techniques, and things you can't get away with in narrative. And electronic music doesn't interfere with the process of selling. It's strange that it can be ubiquitous in people's lives and not be charting in the top 40."

Udomy doesn't think it's strange at all. "To the level that advertising is mainstream, techno is too. People like using it because it pushes films so hard, clients say, 'I just want to turn it up a notch.' People react on such a visceral level with that four-on-the-floor beat, they know exactly what you're trying to say. When I just started five years ago, people were resistant to techno. They'd say, 'We want rock 'n' roll.' Now all they want is electronic music."

Kurt Haluska, a producer at music house Elias Associates NYC, agrees. "It lends itself to scoring instantly," he says. "Now techno is so prevalent in commercials, I think it's over exposed. It's already become passé."

In the last five years, advertising has, to borrow a phrase, come a long way, baby. The disgruntled youth of the early '90s are now the gainfully employed people of the late '90s. And many of the more music-savvy members of that generation—some of whom, as Hyman points out, may well have been music directors at their colleges' radio stations—are entering media-related careers with the hopes of influencing the way the rest of us hear the world. Kaplan, himself, is evidence of this. "I'm relatively new to advertising, I've only been in it three years," he says. "When I first started I remember thinking, 'We spend all this money to hire a long-haired guy with a synthesizer who was maybe in a band 25 years ago.' It was the part of the process that felt the phoniest. I saw there was a lot of opportunity to go to smaller labels and grant exposure to interesting music you wouldn't hear anywhere else. It was really gratifying to put Talvin Singh in a Phillippe spot."

There's no denying that the music coming out of the tube these days sounds better than ever, because it's fresher and more current. So why should we bother complaining? As Kaplan judiciously observes, "Five years ago the question was, 'What pop act?' Now anything can be discussed."

MMH

TURN ON, TUNE IN

Think you've been paying attention to the music piping through television commercials? Test your savvy by matching up the following artists with the company they're huckstering for.



1) Fatboy Slim



2) Hurricane #1



3) Hepcat



4) Aphex Twin



5) Reverend Horton Heat



6) Aïr



7) Squirrel Nuts Zippers



8) Crystal Method

- a) The Gap
- b) L'Oréal
- c) Intel Pentium
- d) Volkswagen

- e) Heineken
- f) Mazda
- g) Oldmobile
- h) Pirelli

Answer Key:
1. g, 2. d, 3. e, 4. h, 5. i, 6. b, 7. c
8. f. Think question 8 and 1

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UNDERGROUND SOUND OF LISBON + MANY MORE

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ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

(MicroProse)—PC



Unless you have a few weeks (or perhaps months) of calendar space cleared, do not huy *RollerCoaster Tycoon*: Your friends and family will not understand that you have an amusement park to run. It's rewarding work though, so if you lose touch with people for a while, you can always live vicariously off the happiness of your patrons. One click gives you a profile on each park attendee, telling you how excited they are, how much money they have left and even how badly they have to use the bathroom. While RCT revolves around the typical Sim "scenarios," where you must develop your park to a stated level in certain amount of time, what makes this game so addictive is its pure attention to detail. As the parkmaster, you're in charge of everything from security, handymen, mechanics, snack stands and marketing campaigns to the color of rides and the types of shrubbery. Once you get the hang of the game itself, it's easy to start constructing monster coasters. Just make sure to test them first, lest you cause a horrific accident (I lost 18 people in a coaster crash my first month on the job). While this all might seem like a lot to manage, the learning curve for RCT is remarkably flat—the interface is extremely friendly and completely intuitive. You'll probably only need to look to the manual for tips and tricks. Consider yourself warned.

>>>Aaron Clow



SID MEYER'S ALPHA CENTAURI

(Electronic Arts)—PC

After pollution and global warfare turns Earth into a barren wasteland, the United Nations packs up some of the best and brightest to colonize a distant planet in an attempt to restart humanity. Unfortunately, your lousy ship blows an O ring and the lot of you wakes up. Luckily, you all resume normal UN practices: hickering. So, it's up to you to lead one of the quarreling factions as you set up a new colony on a fungus-ridden planet. You must build bases, develop units, manage resources, and deal with the odd faction leader who's bent on snagging some of your turf. *Alpha Centauri* has it all—diplomacy, warfare, economics, probe units (step aside Bond, these guys are bad-ass), as well as a sentient life form that visits you in psychedelic interludes—did I mention it's a fungus-ridden world? Options abound, from map size, skill and amount of land vs. sea, to what kind of ideology you'd like to follow (or not). Fear not though, with the onboard tutor, you'll be stomping on that monopolistic bastard in no time.

>>>Piggy

BALDUR'S GATE

(BioWare)—PC

TSR's *Dungeons And Dragons* role-playing franchise has spawned its first completely accurate computer game in *Baldur's Gate*. If you've ever rolled a 20-sided die you'll instantly recognize the framework of this immense game, which spans five CDs. As the main character, you begin your adventure in the quaint town of Candlekeep. A sinister story of evil slowly begins to unfold as you travel across open fields, thick forests, through small villages, and finally, to the city of Baldur's Gate itself. It pays to speak with travelers you meet along the way, for they might see fit to join your party and help you fight off any bounty hunters and monsters you might encounter (yes, eventually you learn there is a price on your head). For those who haven't yet entered the world of D&D, *Baldur's Gate* is a decent place to start. The most essential rules are contained in the relatively brief manual, as opposed to the tomes which encompass standard Advanced D&D. Fans of role-playing games may find the D&D rules a little too constricting at times, but if you're looking for an unrestricted story, nothing comes closer to non-linear gameplay than *Baldur's Gate*.

>>>Aaron Clow

MEDIÉVIL

(Sony Computer Entertainment America)—PlayStation

MediEvil has been on the shelves for a while, but if you haven't checked it out, it certainly deserves a look. As Sir Daniel Fortesque, who led the king's army into battle against an evil sorcerer and was credited for a victory (even though he actually got killed during the first charge), you must redeem your good name among the spirits who know the real story of your demise. The splendid, cartoonish graphics take a few cues from the films of Tim Burton—eerie graveyards invade rolling hills, and your own character is but a skeleton of his former self. What stands out in *MediEvil*, though, is the fun factor. The game is just a hoot to play and its puzzles are amusing, if a bit on the easy side. You won't get lost in the game, nor will you find an area where you simply can't get through without a little effort. A perfectly balanced game such as *MediEvil* is a true rarity and it's a must-have in the library of any well-rounded PlayStation gamer.

>>>Aaron Clow

IN MY LIFE

APRIL MARCH: Grand Designs

Photos: Kim Apley

Before becoming Francophile chanteuse April March, the commercial artist also known as Elaine Blake worked on Archie Comics and as an animator for Pee-Wee's Playhouse and Ren & Stimpy. She's currently taken to oil painting and aspires to illustrate a children's book, which makes New York's famous art supply store Pearl Paint a tour-stop home away from home.

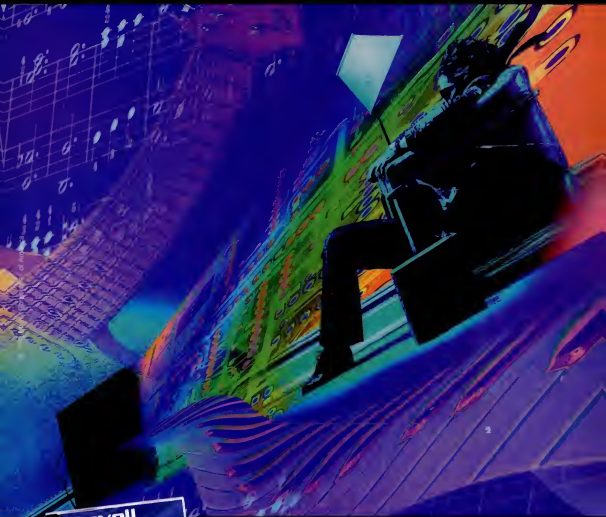
"I drew just like all little kids do, but I was really kind of studious about it. And then I just watched, like, a million cartoons. I knew when I was a little kid, that that's what I wanted to do. So I'd be watching cartoons all afternoon and my parents would come in and go, 'You can't watch any more cartoons, your brain is gonna rot.' And I'd be like, 'No, no, no. You'll see.' And then it's a joke because you know, later on I totally held it over my mom and I'd be like, 'See! It all paid off.'"



April March's newest release is *Cherophobia* (October 2014)

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July 13

DAVID BALL *Play Warner Bros.*
BELLE AND SEBASTIAN *Tigermilk Matador*
 —Reissue of Scottish group's long-out-of-print debut album
GOVERNMENT *Drums Of A Cryotank: Europe, Sequence: Theramin (EP) (reissues) Metropolis*
HENRY COW *Unrest NorthSide*
DEERHOOF *Holy Pwn. SIC Kill Rock Stars*
TERRY DEXTER *Terry Dexter Warner Bros.*
GROJTH *Wish We Never Met Hellcat*
GANG STARR *Full Clip: A Decade of Gang Starr Vinyl Singles*
PETE HAMB *Goldens Greece Rykodisc*
 —Second disc of previously unreleased tracks recorded by the Redding frontman in his home studio
HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS *The Much Fun Rounder*
 —First album in 30 years from influential DIY folk band
PAUL JONES *Pucker Up Buttercup. Fat Possum-Epiphany*
 —The artist formerly known as Paul "Wise" Jones
KATIES *The Katties Spongebath-Elektra*
LIL' ED AND THE BLUES IMPERIALS *Get Wild Alligator*
LORDS OF ACID *Expand Your Head Antler Subway-Nerve*
MR. BUNGLE *California Warner Bros.*
 —The latest from the band fronted by former Faith No More vocalist Mike Patton
ORANGE 9MM *Pretend I'm Human Ng*
KENDALL PAYNE *Jordan's Sister Capitol*
KELLY JOE PHELPS *Shine Eyed Misted Zen Rykodisc*
POCKET SIZE *100 Percent Human Atlantic*
MAKI PRIEST *Combination Virgin*
SCHNEIDER TM *Molat Musi*
SHOWOFF *Falling Star Maverick*
SOUNDTRACK *Evies Wide Shot Reprise*
 —Soundtrack to Kubrick's final film, including classical scores, some jazz (Brook Meltdown, Oscar Peterson Trio) and a David Kates (producer of *Sugar Ray* and *Sublime*) mix of "Baby Did A Bad, Bad Thing" (from Chris Isaak's 1985 album, *Favored Fruit*)
SUPER FURRY ANIMALS *Guerrilla Flypaddy*
THOSE EASTARD BOYS *Deixis & Depuration V2*
 —Second album by group featuring former members of the Giltfers, the Dumbbitches and the late Jeff Buckley's band
JASON TRADER *My Religion Is Love K*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Devil's Tune NorthSide*
 —Collection of Norwegian fiddle tunes by Knut Hamre, Ale Molde, Kullbasse Buse and others
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Return Of The Grievous Angel Allstar Sounds*
 —Star-studded tribute to Gram Parsons, featuring Cowboy Junkies, Peverlisters, Evan Dando, Lucinda Williams and many others
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Revenge Of The B Boy Bomb*
 —Soundtrack to a breakthrough movie (I Saw You Mama Breakdancing Back Naked) still looking for distribution; includes DJ Funz and Shorten, N.Y.dropout, and others
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Unknown Works Astralwerks*
 —Compilation of unsigned American electronic artists
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Wizard Women Of The North NorthSide*
 —All female Nordic artists including Annbjörg Lien, Hegg Træsvang and Tullu
LOUDOU WAINWRIGHT *Social Studies Hamelin*
 —Collection of the regional singer Wainwright has recorded for NPR over the years, including anthems about some of our most beloved annual occasions
WHORIDAS *High Times Southpaw/Delicious Vinyl-VTT*
 —Second album from Bay Area Rappers; features Xhibit, San Double, Yukmouth and others

July 20

RICO BELL AND THE SNAKE HANDLERS *Dark Side Of The Mercy Bloodshot*
 —Mekons occasion's sophomore solo CD
CAFE TACUBA *Rever/Yoisy Warner Bros.*
DECODED FEEDBACK *EVOLution Metropolis*
EVL TAMBORINES *Library Nation Sub Pop*
 —New Northwest hip-hop act; features vocals from Lou Maffeo and Some Velvet Sidewalk's Al Larsen
FUDENISA *No More Tears Epic*
ROBYN HITCHCOCK *Jewels For Sophia Warner Bros.*
JOYLO ISLEMIAS, JR. *Under My Eyes Epic*
 —Does Willie Nelson have a son?
FREDDY JOHNSON *Blue Days, Black Nights Elektra*
SOEY MATOS *Live At MOCA Cubop*
NERVES *New Animal Thrill Jockey*
PUNCHO *Collapses Con Soul Cubop*
QUANNUM *Spectrum Quannum*
 —Debut for West Coast hip-hop supergroup featuring Josh Davis (DJ Shadow) and members of Blackalicious and Latyrx
LALO SCHRIFFIN *Talkin' Verve Verve*
SOUNDTRACK *Outside Providence Giant-Reprise*
 —Soundtrack to next Farrelly Bros. (There's Something About Mary) film, including '70s rock from Wings, Eagles and others
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Altered States Of Drum & Bass #1—Raymond Robet One*
 —Jungle compilation mixed by URB magazine publisher Raymond Robet
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Intimate Portraits: Women Of Country Rhino*
 —Inspired by Lifetime television series, this compilation features Barbara Mandrell, Tammy Wynette, Tanya Tucker and others; subsequent releases to include *Women Of Soul* and *Women Of Rock*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Odds Sorens: Red Hot + Lisbon Red Hot+Blues*
 —Trib album for AIDS relief organization, featuring 40 artists from 11 countries, all singing in Portuguese
ZACK WYDGE *Book Of Shadows Spiritfire*
 —Reissue with bonus tracks, extra CD

July 27

BLAKE OYSTER CULT *Beat Of Sony Legacy*
PHIL COLLINS SUE BAND *A Hot Night in Paris Atlantic*
EARTH, WIND & FIRE *Gratitude: That's The Way of the World: All N' All Sony Legacy*
 —Expanded edition releases with bonus tracks; mostly live and obscure takes
EYC *I Feel It Red Ant*
 —American pop trio, a la 'N Sync
MACY GRAY *Macy Gray On How Life Is Cleon Studio-Epic*
ISLEY BROTHERS *It's Your Thing: The Story Of The Isley Brothers Sony Legacy*
 —Three CD retrospective
LAMB *Fear Of Pocus Mercury*
P-ZIG *Royal Astronomy Astralwerks*
PORTABLE *Secret LifeTVT*
LOU LEEK *When the Clock Strikes 12TVT*
SOUNDTRACK *Loves Stinks Red Ant*
SOUNDTRACK *Soul Ecstasy Emperor Norton*
 —Soundtrack from a 1972 psychedelic hallucination film that was only shown in a few theaters
TOWER OF POWER *Work Occasion: Tower Of Power Live Sony Legacy*
 —Was 20th Anniversary live album, recorded in San Francisco in 1988
VARIOUS ARTISTS *East Coast Of Oil Radical*
 —Featuring Wretched Ones, Infidiotz, Ducky Boys, Cults, Heidrick Siew, Niblick Neelane and others

August 3

AMAZING CROWNS *Royal Monolith*
 —Formerly known as Amazing Royal Crowns
CLUB TROPICANA *Club Tropicana Atlantic*
 —Soundtrack to Cuban dance show
CATIE CURTIS *A Crash Course in Roses Rykodisc*
G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE *Philadelphonic Okeh-150*
GUIDED BY VOICES *Do The CollapseTVT*
 —Produced by Curt Man Ric Ocean
BETH HART *Screamin' For My Supper Atlantic*
MAGNA *See It Another Way Jewel*
JAY MAHAL & TOUMANI DIABATE *Kulajanon Hamelin*
 —Taj Mahal and Mali's Toumani Diabate (oo Adicun bap-tulul) together with a Malian ensemble
PIETASTERS *Aweosom Mixtape #6 Hellcat*
SORTEN MULD *Mark II NorthSide*
SOUNDTRACK *The White BoysTVT*
 —New tracks by Big Pun, Soop Dogg, Hurricane & The Flipmode Squad, Rockwold, Can-F-Bus, and Cooman & Sick Rick
SPEECH *HoplaTVT*
 —Solo release from Arrested Development frontman

August 10

BASEMENT JAZZ *Nesedy Astralwerks*
 —Debut from British house duo
ES *Social Dancing Grand Royal-Capitol*
 —Long delayed second album from Scottish pop group
DAVID SOYKIN OUTLET *Evidence Of Life On Other Planets Thrill Jockey*
JOE SRIBN *Meantimes Atlantic*
 —Producer of Rufus Wamboldt, Fionna Apple and others goes solo with pop debut
NORMAN BROWN *Celebration Warner Bros.*
SARAH DOUGHER *Duo One K*
 —Debut album from member of the Lookers and the Crabs
DEAF RIVER PIPE *The Gasoline Age Merge*
ETERNALS *Where Will We Live Now Thrill Jockey*
GOMEZ *Virgin*
IGUHERANDA JULY *Girls On Dates EP K*
ISOFOPE 217 *Ultimate Automatic Thrill Jockey*
SOB JAMES *Joyride Warner Bros.*
LUCKY HARTON *On Maverick*
HADDER ROSE *Hello Jane Feet Thrill Ear*
NAKED RAYGUN *Homeless Screams EP, Thrill Ear; All Rise; Jettison; Underneath?; Raygun... Naked Raygun (reissues) Touch And Go*
 —Such And Go reissues the catalog of Chicago punk band
PSYCHOTICA *Pandemic Red Ant*
SKULL CONTROL *Deviate Beyond All Means Of Capture Touch And Go*
 —Debut album from Washington, DC, band combining members of the Monochord and the Delta 72
SUNKY AMANISH *Post Organic Chill Virgin*
SPRAY LIP RAYFIELD *In The Mud Bloodshot*
ERIC REED *Manhattan Melodies Verve*
SUPERCHUNK *Coase Pick Me Up Merge*
 —New album produced by Jim O'Rourke
SUPERCHUNK *Superchunk: No Picky For Kitty: On The Mud (reissues) Merge*
SUPERBROTHERS *The Greatest Rock 'N Roll Band In The World Sub Pop*
 —28 tracks spanning their career to date, including a number of unreleased tracks
TNT *Transmission Spiritfire*
TRAILER BRIDE *Whine De Lune Bloodshot*
STIVE VAI *The Electric Light & Sound Epic*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Temple Of Hip-Hop Reprise*
 —KRS-One-sembled compilation of new material from Big Daddy Kane, Chemist, Mad Lion, The-El, Raw Kass, Scanzonians and others
WESTERN *Beat Box Rocker (12) Mute*

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USE YOUR MIND TRUST YOUR EARS

(continued from page 50)

charging a \$10-15 cover when touring bands come through—but it's worth the extra cash. Most of the time, the Tea Room, with an interior that recalls old Texas dance halls, is a haven for the "no depression" set, but it has also booked shows by bands like Built To Spill, Deep Ellum Live, on the other hand, makes up for what it lacks in ambiance by hosting great shows by the likes of bigger national acts like the Descendents, Rocket From The Crypt, and Seohadoh.

The Dallas club scene has few entries, but there is one worth mentioning: the Lizard Lounge (2424 Swiss, 826-4768), owned in part by Hollywood Hogan's tag-team partner, Dennis Rodman. Local DJs spin most nights of the week, and Barry Ashworth of the Duh Pistols and Deejay Punk-Roc have played DJ sets in recent months.

Curtain Club (2800 Main, 742-2336) is one of the newer venues in town, and also one of the most Dallas-centric: The club has a fairly strict locals-only booking policy. It can result in more than its fair share of off-nights—few cities have enough good hands to fill an entire month of shows, let alone a year—but the Curtain Club is proof enough of the wealth of talent Dallas has to offer. And the Curtain Club's front room, Liquid Lounge, is one of the only spots in town to check out Dallas's sorely under-appreciated hip-hop scene.

Record Stores

Like most other major cities, Dallas's mom-and-pop record shops are being edged out by the big chain stores. But a few stalwarts remain, such as Bill's Records And Tapes (8118 Spring Valley, 972-234-1486), an oasis built from dust and cardboard. Owner Bill Wisener has been a fixture in North Dallas for 17 years, and can usually be found chain-smoking behind the counter as he sings along to Ben Harper albums. He has a fortune in memorabilia on the walls and in the bins, and even longtime employees don't know where everything in the store is. But if you dig long enough, you're sure to find some bit of treasure.

And if that Bill doesn't have it, then another Bill—Bill Stafford—probably does. His store, CD World (5706 E. Mockingbird, 826-1885), may have a generic-sounding name, but it has an impeccable selection. The store is scarcely bigger than most living rooms, yet the staff makes every hit count, especially when it comes to the used CD section, which is easily the best in Dallas.

If vinyl is what you're after, look no further than Collectors Records (10616 Garland Road, 327-3313). The employees are serious music fans and will probably know what you're looking for even if you don't. Bonus: Collectors also buys and sells eight-track tapes.

Restaurants

Sushi Nights (2604 Main, 752-0100) is the Dallas music community's clubhouse, with local artists making up much of the clientele and almost all of the staff. The restaurant clears out a few of its tables on weekends so hands can play; it's not uncommon to see a performance by the same people who just served you your food.

If you're in the mood for Mexican food, you can't go wrong with Sol's Taco Lounge (2626 Commerce, 651-SOLS), the home of some of the best salsa north of the border. Jim Heath, known to most as the Reverend Horton Heat, can be regularly found in one of Sol's hack booths, digging into a plate of tacos, which are as good as they are cheap.

And there is perhaps no better place to go after a night on the town than Café Brazil (2815 Elm, 747-2730), where you can relieve the hunger—and the guilt—caused by drinking your dinner. The food is good and good for you, and the coffee more than lives up to the restaurant's name.

All phone numbers are area code 214, unless otherwise indicated.
Zac Crain is the music editor at the Dallas Observer.

CURTAIN CLUB



COLLECTORS RECORDS

Collectors Records



LIZARD TEA ROOM



Localzine

DALLAS, TEXAS

story & photos: ZAC CRAIN



When Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots from a mail-order rifle out of a sixth-floor window at Dallas's Texas School Book Depository, he killed President John F. Kennedy and our city's reputation at the same time. Dallas became known as The City of Hate in the public's mind, and even three decades later it seems as though we may never shake that stigma. Especially because, by now, that reputation has actually become helpful to the city's tourism industry. The Sixth Floor Museum (411 Elm, 747-8660) and the Conspiracy Museum (110 S. Market, 741-3040) offer differing versions of the truth for a price. And nightclubs such as the Ruhy Room (3606 Greenville, 823-8333), named after Oswald gunman Jack Ruhy, have turned the assassination into a kitschy gimmick, down to a Grassy Knoll built with Astro turf.

While Dallas seems to get much of its historical identity from that one moment in 1963, the city's music and the area where much of it comes from—a three-block area known as Deep Ellum—has a rich history, with defining moments spread across the entire century. That history begins in the 1920s, when bluesmen like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter sang about the "Deep Ellum Blues" in cafes and speakeasies. It also includes a crucial era in the '30s when a small collection of musicians and artists reclaimed the area with a series of "outlaw parties."

Stevie Ray Vaughan was born in Dallas and played his first shows here. Willie Hutch—the Motown songwriter who penned "I'll Be There" for the Jackson 5—still lives on the outskirts of town. Erykah Badu got her start here, as did Butthole Surfer Gihy Haynes and Robbie Van Winkle, better known as Vanilla Ice. (Okay, so we're not so proud of that one.) Dallas's more recent musical contributions include everything from the psychedelic freakouts of Tripping Daisy to the hoogie punk of the Tondies to the twangy pop

of the Old 97's. All of which has very little to do with the fact that Dallas is where JFK lost his life a generation ago. Here are some places that may help the city earn a reputation for something other than that one ghastly event.

Venues

Sadly, commerce has recently begun to take its toll on Deep Ellum; a handful of developers have decided to clean up the area, take out the trash, and build loft apartments. The Orbit Room, one of the city's last true punk rock dives, was forced to shut its doors late last year, and more clubs will probably meet the same fate before long. Club Clearview (2806 Elm, 939-0077) is one of the few links to Dallas and Deep Ellum's recent past. Since its early origins as one of Deep Ellum's first real clubs, Clearview has abandoned its former location for a space housing four separate, but not equal, establishments under one roof. The other three—Blind Lemon, Art Bar, and Red—have sold out to the rich kids and young professionals, but Clearview keeps the flickering spirit of the long-gone "outlaw parties" alive, with performances every weekend by local luminaries such as the Commercial and the Tomorrowpeople.

Trees (2709 Elm, 748-5009), so named because the ceiling inside has been painted to look like a forest, is where the best local and national acts come to play; the eclectic venue recently hosted a rare performance by the Flaming Lips. A few times a month, the club offers free shows featuring some of the better bands in town, such as Legendary Crystal Chandelier, which is fronted by Deep Ellum veteran Peter Schmidt. Bar Of Soap (3615 Parry, 823-6617) also offers free shows and, as an added bonus, you can do your laundry at one of the machines in the back of the venue.

The Gypsy Tea Room (2548 Elm, 74-GYPSY) and Deep Ellum Live (2727 Canton, 748-6222) are a hit more expensive—

(continued on page 88)

Old Pike




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